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A CORNER IN WHEAT.

How Two Young Men Plotted to Wreck a Railway Train, and How Fate Played Into Their Hands.

By MARY BELLE BENNETT.

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CHAPTER I.

When I first knew Grant Davis he was assistant bookkeeper in an office in the Boyce building, Chicago, and lodged in a furnished room on Washington boulevard. He was a handsome, slender young fellow, with a pair of blue eyes that sparkled when he talked, and with a certain dash and vim in manner and speech that made him easily the leader in a coterie of clerks and accountants as reckless as himself; and many a night these young gentlemen made of it when the wine was in and the wit was something terrible. He was never known to have a dollar put aside for a rainy day, and while, on the surface, his life appeared to be a madly happy and care-free one, it was to my certain knowledge spotted and frayed with the harrowing worries which come of a salary of fifteen dollars a week and an expense account of twenty.

In those days Fred Fowler was Grant's special chum, and their rooms, their meal tickets, and not infrequently their shoes, hats and overcoats were common property between them.

The corner in wheat that I am telling you about was Grant's idea in the beginning, though the young men developed it together, and the execution of it was made possible by the unexpected benevolence of an uncle Fowler had in New York, who, one day after a particularly happy hit in the stock market, generously gave the young man a thousand dollars, perhaps in the fond hope that the graceless young scamp might be thus induced to give in some of his convivial habits and learn thrift and prudence.

Now, as a rule, a gift of money is not the best manner of accomplishing such reforms as the uncle had in mind, and but for Grant's audacious idea all hopes built upon this particular gift might have been ruthlessly dashed to earth. Of course the money burned in the pockets of Fowler's baggy trousers and, of course, when it came, he was ripe for any mischief. But Grant Davis, seeing prospective benefit to himself likely to accrue from the improved condition of his friend's finances, talked harshly and dictatorily to Fowler, and reasoned with him night after night when they should have been in bed, and so, having great influence with the young man, succeeded in keeping the gift of the uncle intact until something definite could be decided upon.

Grant's idea regarding the corner in wheat came to him like an inspiration one evening when the two were dining on sausages and coffee at a little restaurant on Clark street, where there was plenty of company of their own sort, and all the evening papers lying about for the use of customers. They often went to this place in those days, and sat down at a little round table and talked things over, for the bill-of-fare suited their purses if not their appetites.

Grant, who had been reading the market reports very intently, presently cast the paper aside and announced that he had an idea.

"We'll put our money into the pit," he said, "and work up a corner on wheat."

"Our money?" echoed Fowler. "My money?"

"Our money," persisted Grant. "Haven't I set up nights to prevent you chucking it to the dogs? Much money you'd have now if I hadn't made sacrifices for you."

"Well," said Fowler, with a provoking grin, "since you've got it all figured out, perhaps we'd better step over to La Salle street and buy up the whole wheat market, tagged for delivery on the first wagon in the morning."

"Don't be hasty, my son," said Grant. "I've got an idea. I tell you."

"You've got a great head, mister," said Jim.

"You said that before," interposed Fowler. "Has your idea any connection with the young man who stands behind the cigar counter at the present moment? He seems to be disengaged."

"No," replied Grant. "I haven't the price. Curb your vicious appetite while I explain things to you."

"Drive ahead," said Fowler, looking disappointed.

"You know Poole," began Grant, "the man who has been sending wheat skyward for a month, ruining thousands to line his own pockets? What do you say to taking a fall out of him?"

"All the money in all the banks in town couldn't do it," was Fowler's comment.

"I'm not talking about money," grunted Grant. "I'm talking about brains. Poole ought to be taken down a peg or two, and we are the men to do it. He's a wolf, is Poole, and sadly in need of a lesson in finance, kicking up this sort of a rumpus in the country. We'll teach him, my friend."

"Your idea doesn't materialize very fast," said Fowler. "Out with it. I'm to supply the capital, I suppose?"

"Yes," was the reply, "and we'll go halves in the profit. You to get your original investment back undivided, you know."

"Kind and generous," ejaculated Fowler. "Go on."

"Poole," began Grant, "has been investing some of his ill-gotten gains in a little jerk-water railway, down here in Indiana, which begins at a blind siding somewhere and ends at no place to speak of. He's going out to make a personal inspection of his purchase. This leads up to the idea."

Fowler looked bored and stared helplessly toward the man behind the cigar counter. Castles in the distant future were less to him than one good smoke in the present. Grant seemed annoyed by the inattention of his companion, but he went on in a whisper: "There's a long stretch of track in Poole's recent purchase which is miles away from any crossline or any parallel railway, also miles distant from any telegraphic facilities, save the one wire that the trains are operated by. I formerly lived down there, and I know the country to be wild and swampy, with farm houses far apart and no patrolitic energy beneath the hats of the natives. With that one wire down, a train stirred in a convenient swamp would be lost to the world for a good twenty-four hours, with all the passengers thereof. Do you begin to understand?"

"No," replied Fowler, his eyes still fixed on the man behind the cigar counter, "I can't say that I do, unless it is that you mean to set up life as a highwayman, making a specialty of railway hold-ups. Hanged if I can make anything else out of your talk."

"When I engage in off-hand robbery," said Grant, "I'll make the wheat pit my base of operations. I'm going to begin by taking old Poole's hide."

Fowler leaned back in his chair and eyed his chum narrowly, as if wondering whether he had taken leave of his senses.

"Are your wheels troubling you tonight?" he finally asked.

"Wheels nothing," was the disgusted reply. "You fail to catch the idea. To put it plainly, what is to prevent us from hunting Old Poole down there in the swamps until we make a deal or two in wheat?"

"What?"

"You heard what I said," continued Davis, quietly. "Wheat would go to the bottom in three hours if we could keep him down there subject to our order. I guess not, eh?"

"In the language of the west," said Fowler, "you're dead plumb loco. What could we do with him down there?"

"Spread reports regarding him—which he wouldn't be in a situation to contradict, by the way—until the bottom fell out of wheat."

"Have we to get him down there? Kidnap him, I suppose?"

"Hardly. Didn't I explain about the inspection train? Listen, and I'll endeavor to inject the plot into your thick head."

Grant leaned over the sloppy table and talked in a whisper for some moments, Fowler listening with absorbed attention.

"It's a risky thing to do," he finally said, "and may land us both in prison."

Grant whispered again for five minutes, and then Fowler, completely won over, began making suggestions. They discussed every detail of the matter, and closed the discussion at Grant's room at midnight. "I'll have to go down there tomorrow night," said Grant, in conclusion, "and if I wire back that timber is all right—great country for telegraph poles and the like—you jump in and sell wheat right up to the limit of your capital. Sell shorts and buy puts until you haven't got a cent."

"And if the scheme should fail?" questioned Fowler, ruefully.

"It can't fail," was the eager reply. "I'll have Old Poole where he can't issue an order or assert his own existence. He's a philanthropist, you know, and, of course, he won't grieve when he discovers that wheat has gone down like a rocket-stick. Of course not. He'll rejoice because of the low price of bread, he will."

"He'll be looking for you with a warrant," said Fowler.

"No, he won't," was the reply. "He'll realize that a trick has been played on him, but he'll have no remedy. By the way, I must take about two-fifty with me. I've got to grease some one's hands down there, as the boys say."

"I'll get the money for you tomorrow," said Fowler. "And don't you wire me to go ahead unless you get things fixed beyond a shadow of a doubt. It's risky business at best, for the attorneys may be able to hold the market until he is heard from."

"Not a bit of it," replied Grant, "and I will go tumbling. Good night, if you must go. See you in the morning."

"You go tomorrow night?"

"Yes, so as to set the trap on Friday, the day after tomorrow. Saturday will be the big day with us, and I may be back, but in order to avoid suspicion you must stay Friday night; that is, if you get my message."

The next day was a long and wearing one to both our scheming and audacious friends, but night came at last, and Grant started away with two hundred and fifty dollars neatly folded in his inside pocket, to grease the way, as he remarked.

II.

On Friday morning, when the July sun shoved its yellow disc above the horizon it sent a flood of brighter light into the face of a tall young man who stood on the rear platform of a railway train with his hands in the pockets of his trousers and a black cigar in his mouth. The train, consisting of two coaches and a diminutive locomotive, was slowly making its way, with much belching of steam, over the low, flat, sodden ground as appeared to lie on frail and decaying timbers insufficiently lifted above pools of dark water having miry, slimy shores and no bottom worth mentioning. In the early light—poor, indeed, in comparison with the rosy light of morning which falls on upland plains because of the dank and miasmatic ladden vapors forever steaming up from the stagnant waters—the young man in the rear coaches, as the train would its way through the dismal place, came out in strong relief against the dark green of the broad-leafed leaves of the tamarack and the deep purple of the swamp flowers, clinging to the sides of the scaly holes of the trees.

The conductor made his appearance as Grant pulled away at his cigar and stood with his back against the casing of the open door. He was a pleasant-faced man, with a touch of gray in his hair and mustaches and accepted with a courteous inclination of the head the cigar Grant held forth.

"Rough country this," said Grant, by way of opening conversation.

"Yes," was the slow reply. "It's enough to give one the ague just to look at it. Every day's section of this roadbed will drop out of sight in the ooze, and then there'll be work for a dredging machine."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Grant. "It would take a long time to build a locomotive out of one of these pools."

"It couldn't be done," replied the conductor grimly. "There's practically no bottom to these sinks. A locomotive would go down to stay if she went down at all."

"I should think so," replied Grant, wondering if the reality would make good the prophecy. "Any settlers hereabouts?"

"There's a few farmers out there to the west," was the reply, "but they're a hard-fortuned lot. Hate the road like poison, though I can't see why they should. There's a little station about five miles down the road, and you may get a look at some of them."

Grant was rather pleased with the information received from the conductor. The people along the line hated the railway company, it would be the easier for him to find the men he needed.

"I think I'll drop off at the next station," he said. "I want to look for timber."

The conductor smoked his cigar out and strolled back into the coach, having failed to study out some means of approaching the railway-hating gentleman whom he left there.

When the train reached the station—just a rickety little house on a knoll of hard ground in the swamp—two men in blue shirts and faded overalls, the bottoms of which were stuffed into the tops of heavy cowhide boots stood in lazy attitudes on the platform. They regarded him with curious eyes as he alighted and looked dismally as the locomotive consumed half a tank of muddy water and pulled off into the swamp and out of sight.

Then, for the first time since the inception of his daring scheme, a little shadow of doubt and fear came into the stout heart of the young man. He wondered how he might best approach the men before him with the inculcating proposal. Suppose he made the attempt to win them over to his purpose and failed? Suppose they pretended consent to his plans and hurried to informers the minute his back was turned? He soon recovered his courage, however, and walked over to where the men were standing.

"We're fairly embarked in the enterprise now," he mused, "and the risk must be taken."

But his voice was a little husky, for all his assurance of purpose as he asked some trifling questions regarding the timber supply.

"Lookin' up telegraph poles?" asked one of the men.

Grant nodded.

"The country's full of 'em," said the man, with a broad sweep of his arm, "but the railroad wants all they'll bring in market to tote out. There's a lot of hogs runs wild this road, mister. I wish it was sunk in the swamp."

"You don't seem to have much love for the railway," suggested the young man.

"I hate it, an' all concerned with it," was the reply. "It don't do much but kill cows. Never pays for them, either."

Grant realized how deeply-seated was the prejudice against the company and rejoiced. The man saw only the present poverty and inconvenience of the railway, never thinking of the benefits to come in the future. But this is a condition of affairs not at all unusual in such localities. The people had expected too much of the line, perhaps had even indulged in the golden dreams of its promoters, and had awakened to the reality of a little wabbling track and two trains a day.

After further conversation of the same tenor, Grant decided that he had found his man, therefore he beckoned him aside. They seated themselves on the stump of a tree not far from the station house, and Grant began.

"I'm in need of two trusty men," he said, "who are not in love with the railway company."

"You've found 'em, I reckon," was the short reply.

"You can keep your mouth closed, I presume," Grant went on, "if there's money in it—more money than you can make in all your life on the farm?"

"I wasn't never accused for doin' too much talkin'," was the careful reply. "You satisfy me that there's money in it all right, and I'm an oyster for the remainder of my life."

"And the man out yonder?"

"My brother? Oh, he's all right. He's agreed and operates here."

"He may lose his job," said Grant. "What about that?"

"He don't get his pay, and he's goin' to quit anyhow as soon as the crops is in. We won't get locked up, will we? You see that wouldn't be nothin' to us. We'd jest might make a fuss about it. She does come down on him powerful hard occasionally. I ain't got no folks, 'cep him, and I don't care much. This place ain't much better'n a jail. Nothin' but buckwheat and pork."

The man was evidently very pessimistic regarding a future in that dreary place, and Grant's hopes grew as he went on.

"Nothing like that could come of it," he said. "I'll tell you what it is—you can figure it out for yourself. I want tomorrow—I'll hold down here in the swamp for a few days, with no telegraphic communication, mind. It's like this:"

The man's eyes bulged when Grant opened up his plans, but he listened patiently. When Grant finished, he sprang to his feet like a youth just out of school.

"And I've got a hundred dollars for you, right here in my pocket," concluded Grant. "What do you say?"

The native slapped the leg of his faded overalls with the open palm of one sunburnous hand.

"They as failin' off a log," he shouted. "You've come to the right market, mister. We've got it in for this railroad. Hello, Jim! Come here."

Jim slouched up with his hands inside the waistband of his trousers and his attention in wonder at the joyful face of his brother.

"Andy says you've struck it rich ever since you got your pension," he said. "What's up, Sam?"

Sam quickly explained things to him, going into the fullest details as to motives. Grant listened to the recital in relation to the two natives.

"You've got a great head, mister," said Jim, with an admiring glance. "Sam," he added, "I've often thought there was where them bridge corners might go down any day and carry the telegraph line with 'em. I'd like to come in on this deal, mister."

"The swamp's middlin' dry," suggested Sam. "They might burn down, you know; yes, sir, burn down, and no one to blame."

"And now," said Grant, desiring them to hear the other side of the case while he was excited to action, "you remember that you can quit the game with a hundred dollars apiece as soon as I have this place. And you might even make a little capital with the company by helping me, and so gain promotion, but it wouldn't pay you to do so. You will have a thousand dollars at the end of the deal, and no one will be the worse for it except the man who is robbing the people by means of the stock market."

"Oh, we'll stick fast enough," said Jim, "and you'll find us wuthin' here for the other nine hundred. You do your part, and we'll do ours. Oh, we've got it in for this company."

Grant, understand, I do not attempt to defend Grant Davis' conduct. On the other hand, I think it very reprehensible, and to be denounced as setting a bad example. But, so long as "bear" leaders and "bull" leaders receive spurious cables from Europe, and fraudulent statistics regarding wheat prospects, just so long will the smaller fry scheme and plan to set the market on a foul basis. Don't hold up your hands in horror, my member of the board of trade. You know what you know, and we will discuss the matter no further. For, you see, I am only telling you what happened once upon a time.

Grant sent a telegram to Fowler before he left the station, and Jim and Sam wondered over it, but as each had a hundred dollars in new bills to show for the stranger's visit, they remained silent.

"I'll be horsed if I know what it means," said Jim, and Sam leaned over his shoulder, after Grant's departure, to read the hastily-written scrawl.

"The timber is all right,'" he read. "I should think it was."

As Grant swung himself onto the platform of the afternoon train the men watched him from the station platform.

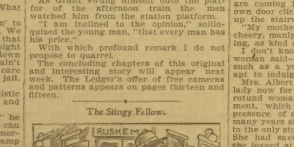
"I am inclined to the opinion," soliloquized the young man, "that every man has his price."

With which profound remark I do not propose to quarrel.

The concluding chapters of this original and interesting story will appear next week. The Ledger's offer of free cameras and patterns appears on pages thirteen and fifteen.

She (optimist)—Does the hero marry the heroine at the end of all their troubles?
He (pessimist)—No, at the beginning.

The Stingy Fellow.



Both—Well, good night, old man, I must hurry home to my wife and baby.

Both—What a stingy fellow. Didn't ask me to drink.

Both——! ? ? D——n!

THE PRINCE AND THE BEGGARS.

BY DOROTHY DEANE.

Like a prince in an old-time story
He sits at his palace gate;
About him bent and hoary
The ragged mendicants wait.
The prince is a dashing fellow,
Wears velvet and cloth of gold,
A tunic and cap of yellow;
Rubies shoot them from the cold.

He quaffs from a crystal chalice,
They stoop to the wayward spring;
He dwells in a lordly palace,
They hide beneath Winter's wing.
They greet him with grateful spirit,
His cape and his tunic gay;
The hats of his cadet wonder,
They think him as free as they.

Then I open the study-shutter,
And scatter their daily bread,
They come with a rush and flutter,
Where the beautiful feast is spread.
For the prince is my fellow guest,
The beggars, so gay and free,
Are only the sparrows wary,
That live in the eaves by me.

My little gold-bird is a poet,
He pipes me a roundelay;
A caution—he does not know it,
And sings in a lithesome way.
But at times in its listless morrow,
He wishes that he might be
A shy little beggar sparrow,
Out in the old elm tree.

A SCRAP OF PAPER.

I was winding my way up the narrow stairway to my humble abode, a candle taper in my hand to guide me through the darkness. I stopped suddenly half way down the corridor. In the dim flickering light of my taper I saw fastened to the door of my landlady's room a white sheet of paper. It was pinned above the doorknob and contained a brief message:

"Dear children," it read, "God bless your home always. We have both, each daughter and beloved son. I couldn't wait for you, because I had to go to the theater. Your mother."

"Ah," I said to myself, "the young couple are away. I'll wait for them." And I in my own door clicked I heard two persons come up the stairway.

"Mamma is not at home," said a cheery, manly voice, "but here is her greeting as kind and loving as ever."

I don't know what else the man or the words said—they were lost in the sobs, such as a young husband and wife were apt to indulge in on their wedding night.

Mrs. Albert Damman had been my landlady now for two years. She was a little, rotund woman, with a motherly, placid temperament, which betrayed every minute the generous, kind heart within. During the many years she had been wardrobe woman at the Columbia Comique in this city. She had saved up a little money, which she loaned at reasonable interest to actors and actresses in hard luck, and she was able besides to do a profitable business in purchasing and selling cast-off party dresses and stage gowns. The glib tongued wardrobe woman was an unmistakably fond of the theater as she was picturesquely discovered about the many rooms which she herself occupied. My own room, in happy contrast, were neatly and simply furnished and I always kept my apartments tidy. The disorder in hers was appalling and stifling to me. Scarcely from all parts of the place hobnobbed with chandeliers and cheval glasses and forgotten gowns.

Mrs. Damman's son was very different in character and disposition from his mother. While she was always in the best of temperament, he was taciturn and slow of comprehension. Even on his fifty years he was as helpless as a child almost. In his habits he was also different—quiet and regular. But his employer, who had given him the position of head bookkeeper in his fruit commissary, His mother and she always ate their meals together. On Sunday he went to the theater, and during the week he waited patiently for the old lady's return from the theater, in which delightful pastime of supper with her. Then she would tell him, with delightful accuracy, all that had happened during the performance, while he listened intently and sometimes with eyes almost closed in sleep.

Now this idyllic existence was about to be interrupted, as I have extended. Albert Damman grew courageous one day and confessed to his mother that he loved a girl and had promised to marry her. Mrs. Damman's verbosity was not sufficient for to conceal this fact from me. As she was serving my coffee one morning she acquainted me with the news of her son's fairy.

"Do you know your son's fiancee?" I asked, just a little uneasy as to how she would take this sudden change.

No, she had never seen her, but inquiry among friends had elicited the information that she came of a respectable family and was a good looking young miss.

"I'll consider her as my daughter," she said, "and they can both live here. My son's salary is not large enough to support a separate household, and I cannot give him anything out of my own means, so they will have to make their home here.

This Month Take Hood's Sarsaparilla
And have new pure and bright blood. Then you will enjoy life.

and my daughter-in-law will have to learn how to please me."

Now the wedding had been celebrated and henceforth the young people would be my neighbors, for their room was next to mine. If my misgivings had continued about the new member of the household, that friendly welcome, pinned to the door of my landlady's quarters on the eve of her arrival, would have dispelled them. In the morning Mrs. Damman as usual, brought my coffee and rolls.

"They are here," she said, with a broad, motherly smile. "Didn't you hear the noise we made when I came home last night? My daughter is a perfect little witch—pretty as as a peach, too. I know you'll like her."

An hour later I sauntered down the hall. A voice, fresh as a bird's, sang a gay little ditty.

"The bride," I mused, and presently she drew a sewing window open with a pair of round, dimpled arms bared to the shoulders. The moment she saw me she blushed and disappeared, dropping the brooch on a little heap of dust she had swept up there. On top of the heap, staring at me in uncomfortable fashion, lay a scrap of white paper.

"The welcome," I murmured, stooped and lifted the motherly greeting to save it from destruction with the rest of the debris.

"She can't be very sentimental," was my silent comment, "or else she would have treasured these penciled lines all her life." Naturally I soon made the acquaintance of the youthful bride and found her to be all that her mother-in-law had said of her. She was as handy and alert about the house as she was fresh and pretty. Mrs. Damman was relieved of a great deal of the work; although she superintended the household as of old, Mary Damman, the young husband, was head over ears in love with his wife, and she became fond of him in her ingenuous, girlish fashion. There were little bickerings between the two women now and then, but they were forgotten in an hour, and all was as calm and peaceful as of old.

An unusual stress of business kept me away from home more than I had been my custom, nearly every day for a month, and when summer came I was ready to indulge in an extended journey that was likely to keep me away from Mrs. Damman's home for at least three months.

Upon returning the family received me with open arms. All three had a friendly word for me and one for each, and I was more than delighted at the continued harmony that pervaded my landlady's home. That much of this harmony was sham I learned before many days. Mrs. Damman was the first to pour out her heart to me. She complained bitterly of the young woman's selfishness, that her daughter-in-law usurped rights which did not belong to her and threatened discomfort of the household. It came sooner than even I anticipated, but in an entirely unexpected manner. After a short period of quiet ever, young Mrs. Damman left the house without telling her mother-in-law whither she was going. She failed to return, and soon everything was as quiet as the grave once more. Fred, the young husband, was even more taciturn than before. To avoid all his mother, now he seemed to regard as the natural enemy of his wife.

One day I met him in the street. "Where is your wife?" I asked. "Don't you hear from her?"

He laid his finger on his lips, forgetting that the newspaper was only a boy and could not possibly hear what he had to say.

"I hear from her very often," he whispered, and a light broke into his clouded eyes.

"Is Mrs. Damman going to remain away from you forever?"

He moved close to me now. "She is right here in town," he answered, "with her aunt and I see her every day."

"I am glad of that," I said. "Perhaps your mother will come around and ask her to come home again."

He shook his head hopelessly. "She does not even want to hear her name spoken," he answered, sadly, "and I haven't money enough to set up housekeeping. My wife is sorry now for what has happened, but she is miserably afraid of my mother."

"What was going to do about it?" He seemed so boyish and fearful of consequences that I could not help getting out of patience with him. If he had had a little more energy, I felt sure the two women would have become separated. He shrugged his shoulders. "I can't help myself," he answered, "and as things are now, I am glad to be able to be with my wife without being molested."

"You must bring them together," I admonished. "It is your duty. Try to make it end in a most unsatisfactory way for affairs."

I raised my hat and walked on. Two weeks later I met the young couple promenading in the park. "Ah," I said, "on your way to church?"

"Fred's going there, but not I," answered the young wife, shyly, holding out her hand to me.

"That's more than I can understand," I said, scowling at Fred, "the wife belongs in her husband's home."

"You know how things are with us," she insisted, with a sob.

"Yes, I know. You are afraid of your mother-in-law, who has a good heart, but is unusually obstinate. And you," turning to the husband, "you do not the courage to bring these two women together. You, my dear Mrs. Damman, went of your own free will, and of your own free will you must go back."

When I saw that my words had made a deep impression on the two young people, I continued: "You had better go home right now and become reconciled to your mother-in-law."

"I intended to away from home this evening," said Fred.

"All the better," I suggested. "Let your wife prepare the tea, and when she comes back from the theater everything will be lovely."

I told them to follow me and, to my joy, saw that they had agreed to do as I bade them. I entered the house about five minutes before they could possibly reach it, for they had perceptibly fallen behind. Once within, I discovered that Fred was in error about his mother's absence. The sewing machine was rattling away at a lively pace. Suddenly an idea crossed my mind. I fingered around my vest pockets and from its depths pulled a scrap of paper. It was Mrs. Damman's welcome to her daughter-in-law on the night of her arrival as a bride. Quickly I pinned it to the door and then withdrew to my own apartment to await the appearance of husband and wife.

The young wife's joyous cry startled me. "From mother!" she gasped as her eyes fell on the poke-of paper on the door. And then she read aloud sentence after sentence, alternately sobbing and laughing: "Dear Children: God bless your home coming. I love you both, dear daughter and beloved son. I couldn't wait for you, because I had to go to the theater. Your Mother."

"Fred, Fred," she sobbed, "your mother wants me to come back again. She has forgiven me, my mother!"

The door flew open and the girl wife rushed in. With a sob she threw herself into the older woman's arms. "Forgive me, mother, forgive me! Oh, how glad I am to be at home again with you!"

A stout, motionless at my door. What next? Mrs. Damman had not opened her mouth. What if she were still obstinate and would drive again from home the penitent girl? But, no, I heard her voice now. "My dear child," she said, softly, "so you are sorry? If you had said so on that night—Friday, that would have been well. I love you; you are my child just as much as he."

"Oh, mother," she sobbed, anew, "I never knew how good you are. Scold me, do what you will with me, you are my darling mother anyhow."

And they were reconciled. They called me to witness their joy, and I had hard work to make Fred understand that I had placed the scrap of paper on the door that had brought such peace and happiness in the little household. It was an innocent deception, and if he ever had the courage to confess it to his wife I never heard of it.

A Real Expansionist.

The Young Theorist—But do you really believe that Providence is with us in "assimilating" all these unwilling peoples?

The Elderly, Self-Made Person—Of course I do. Or if it ain't, it will kerech up sooner or later.

14 Beautiful Prizes.

The U. S. Distillers Distributing Co. offer watches, whisky, cigars, jewelry and a lot of other prizes in order to introduce their goods. Read their ad. on page 10 this issue.

It's impossible to accumulate a supply of records; the making of a new one breaks the old one.

DAN GROSVENOR SAYS:

"Peruna Is an Excellent Spring Remedy."

HON DAN. A. GROSVENOR, OF THE FAMOUS OHIO FAMILY.

Hon. Dan. A. Grosvenor, Deputy Auditor for the War Department, in a letter written from Washington, D. C., says:

"Allow me to express my gratitude to you for the benefit derived from one bottle of Peruna. One week has brought wonderful changes and I am now as well as ever. Besides being one of the very best spring tonics it is an excellent catarrh remedy. Very respectfully.

Dan A. Grosvenor."

Hon. John Williams, County Commissioner, of 17 West Second street, Duluth, Minn., says the following in regard to Peruna: "As a remedy for catarrh I can cheerfully recommend Peruna. I know what it is to suffer from that terrible disease and I feel that it is my duty to speak a good word for the tonic that brought me immediate relief. Peruna cured me of a bad case of catarrh and I know it will cure any other sufferer from this disease." Respectfully, John Williams.

Mrs. Lucretia A. Wilcox writes from Cherry Valley, N. Y., the following: "I had chronic catarrh for twenty years. I tried many remedies but found but little relief until I took Peruna. I have taken twelve bottles and am well of catarrh, and I thank Dr. Hartman and Peruna."

For a free book containing valuable advice on the causes and treatment of catarrh, written by Dr. S. B. Hartman, the compounder of Peruna, address The Peruna Medicine Company, Columbus, Ohio.

A Drummer's Bad Break.

"It takes some time to learn the social ropes in Central America," remarked a gentleman in the banana trade, "and a stranger is very apt to put his foot in it. The first time I ever went into the country myself was as the representative of an American machinery house. There was a good field for us in one of the republics, but the tariff was prohibitive, and I concluded to go over the situation and have an interview with the minister of agriculture, hoping to persuade him to recommend a reduction. I spoke pretty fair Ollendorf Spanish, but was otherwise as green as a gourd, and as soon as I arrived I made a few like for the administration building.

"While I was strolling my heels in an antechroom, waiting for a chance to speak to somebody in authority and ascertain how the minister could be seen, a very black, fat little negro waddled in, wearing what I took to be a species of livery. He had exactly the air of an important, overfed house servant, and he looked me over in a way that made my blood boil. 'Hi, boy!' said I, sharply, 'how long must I wait before I can see your master?' 'Here you are, sah,' he replied in Spanish; 'if it doesn't suit you get out.' He chuckled as he spoke, and his answer so infuriated me that I hot my head.

"Jumping up I seized him by the collar and the slack of his absurd red velvet trousers and propelled him, turkey fashion, through the open door. 'There, you black scoundrel!' I exclaimed, 'go and send somebody after my card!' The little fat darky was in a towering passion, but couldn't get at me. He simply gasped and disappeared. Half a minute later a squad of soldiers rushed in and placed me under arrest, and then I learned that my friend in the embroidered pantaloons was the minister of public instruction.

"I will leave you to imagine my feelings. It took three hours of solid talk from both the American and British consuls to get me out of the scrape, and, incidentally, I made a grovelling apology. Of course, I didn't dare to introduce the machinery proposition after such a debut, so my trip was a total failure. As I said before, it takes some time for a stranger to grasp the etiquette of these parts."

Too Confident.

"This bill isn't what I think it right to expect," grumbled the man who had stepped up to the cashier's window at the gas company's office.

"Two dollars, hey?" said the cashier, glancing at the bill. "That doesn't seem to be very exhorbitant. What was it the month before?"

"Four dollars."

"You didn't kick on that, did you?"

"No."

"Why is this so much smaller?"

"The wife was out up for half the month."

"Then what are you complaining about? Isn't $2 about right?"

"Yes; but blame it, I made a bet of $5 the other day that the bill would be as big as usual."

Good Reason to Be Superstitious.

"Superstition," he exclaimed. "Of course, I am superstitious. I sat down to dinner at one of a party of thirteen on the thirteenth of the month, and thirteen confronted me at breakfast."

"And one of them died?"

"Yes, six. Six of them died."

"How soon after the dinner?"

"Thirteen years after. Oh, I tell you, when anything occurs to dinner I dread sure thing that somebody is going to die some time."

TRANS-ATLANTIC TRAVELERS

Furnished Special Attendants by the Pennsylvania System.

The bureau of information for trans-Atlantic travelers established in Jersey City and New York City twenty years ago by the Pennsylvania System, has proven a great convenience to persons making European trips and to tourists arriving in America at that port. It has become a most convenient for visitors to the Paris Exposition because the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Atlantic Steamship Lines are convenient to the great Pennsylvania Railroad terminal in the Pennsylvania Railroad Company.

The bureau consists of experienced agents whose duties are to meet passengers arriving in Jersey City and New York over the Pennsylvania Railroad, assist them in arranging for trans-Atlantic trips via any of the lines, look after the baggage of them to steamships and aiding in preparations for a trip abroad.

These agents will provide cabs operated by the Pennsylvania System and all passengers with their baggage. They are fully posted on matters pertaining to steamships leaving New York, and arrangements can be made through them for procuring tickets in advance.

They also meet incoming steamships to aid travelers in changing money, and assisting journeys from New York over the Pennsylvania Railroad by furnishing checks, arranging for the transfer of baggage from steamship docks after it has been passed by customs officials, and seeing that the same checked through to destination. They will reserve sleeping car accommodations and relieve persons of the foregoing details, making themselves useful as attendants and guides free of charge.

Further information on the subject may be obtained from Mr. Theodore L. Derring, Asst General Passenger Agent, No. 248 South Clark St., Chicago.

Waning of the Honeymoon.

"What time will you be home, dear?" asked the young wife as her husband started down town after breakfast.

"Oh, about 1 o. m., I guess," was the reply.

"You mean 1 p. m., don't you?" she asked.

"No," replied the heartless wretch, "I mean just what I said—1 o. m. tomorrow, see?"

PAD MAILS TO ROB GOVERNMENT.

Railways Charged With Fraud in Tests on Which Rates Are Based.

Washington, D. C., March 26.—[Special to the Chronicle.]—The padding of mails at a time when the average weight is determined by contract between the railroads and the government is exposed in a report by Special Agent Fechtig, a former employe of the Colorado Midland Railway company.

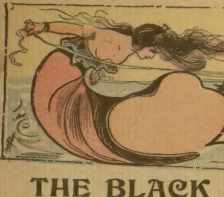
Tons and tons of "faked" mail, Congressional records and fraudulent documents are shipped and reshipped in United States mail sacks between point and point on the road for a period of about thirty consecutive days when the average weight is obtained and used as a basis of compensation for the four years following. Fechtig is now a government employe.

This is the season for weighing the mails in the south. It is also the time when representatives and senators are sending packages of public seeds to their constituents. Immense quantities of cotton and tobacco seeds are in shipment through the mails to the southern states. Fechtig's disclosures come at a time when the subject is of pertinent interest, and leave no possible doubt as to the existence of a gigantic system of robbery.

In an affidavit now in the possession of the postmaster-general, Fechtig swears that in April, 1894, while employed as a station agent on the Colorado Midland division of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad, he assisted in the padding of United States mails by direction of his superior officers. He says in his affidavit:

"From what I know of the mail revenues of the Southern Railway company I am satisfied that the fraud is carried on in a gigantic way, and that the government is annually defrauded of from $5,000,000 to $10,000,000 by the railroads of the United States."

Mr. Fechtig offers to prove by witnesses that during the season of weighing mails the railroads mail great masses of heavy matter to any and everybody for the express purpose of increasing the carrying receipts.



THE BLACK DAGGER.

Story of the Strange Mascot Mystery---The Fire of Human Hearts --- Who Killed Lord Basil?

By T. C. HARBAUGH,

Author of "A Sinner at Bay," "Man in Gray," *etc.*

(Copyrighted, 1900.)

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CHAPTER IX.

THE GLITTER OF A BUTTON.

"Well, Nolan, I have about made up my mind to go."

"Not to London, my dear?"

"To London."

Mrs. Nolan, the housekeeper of Mascot Hall, held up her chubby hands in the utmost surprise.

She and Valerie were in the library whither she had been summoned by her young lady's note, and she had hastened to obey the call. It was night and outside a stiff breeze was moving the trees, bending them gently toward the old house.

"My child, you don't know the city," exclaimed the old lady, her cheeks paling at the mien of Valerie's going.

"I won't see much of it, I'm sure. I know where to look for Mr. Black."

"Wait a few days longer."

"Why wait? I have heard nothing from him since he went away the day after the tragedy. If I cannot find him I will see some detectives. In this wail, for I will not rest until I have run the murderer to earth. Then, I may hear something of Max."

"I beg pardon, my child, but if you will let me say it I will remark that I don't think that young man did a smart thing when he went away right on the heels of the murder. It looks bad, very bad."

"Are you don't think, Nolan—"

"I don't know what to think," interrupted the caretaker. "It looks bad, I say. Then, the game lodge is closed and old Jocyln, the young man's father, has skipped out, too."

"I don't associate the father's going away with the sudden departure of the son," said Valerie.

"That looked bad, too. I once heard it intimated that the boy wasn't old Jocyln's boy at all, but another. They say that he was a foundling who never knew anything about his parents. But people will talk, you know, my dear. Now, about your going to London. You won't, will you? Go to bed and sleep over the matter and tell me in the morning that you have changed your mind."

"If I can change my mind you shall know it, Nolan."

"Think of leaving me alone in the house with that wretch of a Hugo. He grows uglier day after day."

"I don't like him any more than you do, Nolan, and, but for the fact that he was poor papa's servant, he should quit Mascot Hall yet this night."

"Last evening I saw him crossing the bridge leading to Lady Judith's estate," said Nolan, at which Valerie started.

"Last night, Nolan?"

"Yes, just about sundown. Thinks I to myself: I wish that the bridge would break down with its wretched load; but there wasn't such good luck. I don't know where he went, but he had his face turned toward Grange."

Valerie recalled her stormy interview with Judith and mentioned if Hugo, the hunchback, had visited her.

"Well, good night, my dear," said Mrs. Nolan. "If you should go to London—perhaps! You won't, will you? There are so many dangers there, and, Jim, you know, hear from Max or Mr. Black within the next few days, and I shall see."

"Good night, Nolan."

The old care-taker curtsied out of the room and left Valerie alone.

"I must go to London. I don't know where else to go," the girl said aloud to herself. "This uncertainty will kill me here. I must see Donald Black; I have something new for him, and, if possible, I must find Max as well."

She rose and crossing the room pressed a button in the wall which opened a door and she stood at the head of a flight of steps.

Picking up a lamp, Valerie went down into the darkness to the corridor which stretched from the bottom step. It was the same corridor which once before she had traversed to the body of her father. She knew it only too well, and as she held the light above her head she saw beyond her her own shadow dancing grotesquely on the cold floor.

A strange silence filled the gloomy place infested with such terrible memories, but Valerie pressed on.

At last she stopped and leaned forward. She had reached the spot where she had looked down into the face of her father, and while she looked again the whole dark scene rose fresh in her mind.

Now she was alone; the dead was not there, neither was Hugo present to interpose his distorted body and ugly face.

Valerie suddenly lifted one hand and found a niche in the wall guarded by a small door. This door she had opened and her hand was beyond it. She had invaded the little treasure room of the Nabob's treasures; but they, of course, were not there.

The wonderful Indian gems, valuable beyond reason, had vanished, together with the black dagger had vanished, too; but she knew what time after she had looked it in the steel safe in the library where it was secure.

A smile came over Valerie's face when she withdrew her hand.

"What is that?—one of the gems?" she exclaimed, as something on the floor against the wall caught her eye with its glitter.

In another moment Valerie held in her white hand a glittering object, a pearl button of exquisite shape and beauty, and she turned it over and over while she gazed at it.

"It's a strange place to find anything like this," said the girl. "I am positive it was here when I found papa that night? If so and I did not see it why didn't Hugo's sharp eyes discover it? Mr. Black came down here when we had searched the spot, but it escaped him, too. Well, it must have been there all the time and none of us found it."

The girl looked the button over and over. A bit of dark cloth still clung to the shank, as if the button had been torn loose during a struggle of some kind.

But a struggle by whom?

A look of mystification came into Valerie's eyes and instead of throwing the button away she put it in her pocket with the words:

"For Donald Black—if I find him."

After this she passed into Hugo's "den," but did not see anything of the hunchback.

As he no longer had the key to the guard he had taken up his quarters in another part of the house and Valerie had given him a room in the wing farthest from her.

Softly the girl re-entered the library and closed the door in the wall behind her. If Nolan had seen the button he had not mentioned it, she would have taken but little hope; indeed, she would have proved her own arguments against the proposed London journey.

Valerie had made up her mind. Perhaps the London visit would end in a fool's quest, but all events a thousand Nolans could not have held her back.

"Why not go at once?" said Valerie to herself. "A woman who knows anything and has a clue to Donald Black can be found in London by night as by day."

Valerie sat down and grew quiet with her jewels and hastily quitted the library.

Twenty minutes later she might have been seen letting herself out of Mascot Hall with a very small grip in her gloved hand. No one stopped to question her, and a note she had thrust underneath Nolan's door to London without waiting to see morning when it would be too late to stop her by arguments and remonstrance.

The little country station was nearly two miles from the steps of The Hall, but Valerie knew the coach would be there, and in a close-fitting dress over which she had put on a neat jacket, and her feet well shod for the journey made no noise as she walked.

When she reached the bend in the road which would hide The Hall she turned and looked back. She saw the light she had left burning in her chamber and the dimmer one in Nolan's, a little sigh heaved her bosom, but it passed like a zephyr.

"I am becoming a heroine, but I can't help it," she said. "God help me I must go to London with what I know. I may never again tread the floors of Mascot Hall; but the terrible mystery must be cleared up. Heaven give me strength to meet all that is before me."

She turned and almost flew toward the station. When she reached it she waited in the shadows for the express and did not enter the depot. When the train pulled up at the platform Valerie sprung herself up the steps and dived into the coach. She was free at last.

And London—an unknown London to her —was ahead.

CHAPTER X.

TRAPPED.

It was not Valerie's first visit to London. On several occasions she had gone thither with her father and had spent some weeks in the metropolis. Once she had gone alone, stopping on Courtenay street, at a little boarding house kept by one Mrs. James, a friend of her father's boyhood, and it was now her intention to put up at the same place.

The girl had provided herself with what she thought would be sufficient funds to see her through, so she was not uneasy on that score. Her great desire was to see Donald Black, the detective, for she wanted to tell him of some incidents that had taken place at The Hall since his departure; her meeting with Judith for one thing, and then she wanted to show him the pearl button which she had found in the corridor.

It was not so very late when the train rumbled into Charing Cross station and Valerie alighted as speedily as possible. Holding onto her grip she faced the cabbies who seemed eager to devour her, and, selecting one she desired him to drive her to the detective offices in Wellington street, Strand.

Valerie had made up her mind that she would find Donald Black before she slept, and, that accomplished, she would seek Mrs. James' house and await developments.

As she settled back in the hansom, glad that the journey was at an end, the wheels turned and she found herself moving over the rough streets.

The ride seemed interminable, but at last the hansom drew up to a curb and Valerie paid her fare and alighted.

She found herself in front of a well-to-do building and, leaving the cab in the gutter to wait for her, she entered with a good deal of eagerness.

To the sergeant on duty she came as a genuine surprise and that individual touched his cap and stood erect at the desk.

"I would like to speak with Mr. Black," said Valerie.

A strange smile came over the sergeant's face at the door and ushered the girl into another com where she saw a rotund gentleman of fifty at a desk.

"Mr. Black, what can we do for you?" asked this personage, turning to Valerie, and speaking with great respectful manner.

Valerie stated her errand.

"I have never seen you before Mr. Black is," was the official reply. "In fact, we have not seen him for two whole days, and, to say the least, he is rather strange. He was to have been here last night at nine o'clock, but he has not showed since. Business of importance, I suppose."

"Yes," said Valerie, then, when he will come in?" inquired the anxious girl.

"Can't say, miss. Has anything befallen him—"

"Can you don't think that?"

"We hope not. It is the first time he has failed to keep an engagement with this office. You know, of course, that a man like Mr. Black makes enemies among a certain class."

"I know that," broke in Valerie, "but I cannot believe that he has fallen into the villain's claws."

"Could not some other member of the secret force assist you as well as Mr. Black?"

"No; not now, at least. Here is my city address," and Valerie wrote on a tablet the name of Mrs. James' house, as she remembered it, and started to leave the room.

"Oh, you're the daughter of the late Lord Mascot," exclaimed the officer staring suddenly at Valerie.

"Yes, sir."

"And you have come to London to consult with Mr. Black concerning the tragedy?"

"That is true, sir."

"I am sure he will be pleased to see you. We'll communicate with you as well as Mr. Black."

"Thank you."

The courteous official would have assisted Valerie to the cab, but she took the initiative herself and was seated in the vehicle.

"Number 333 Courtenay street," she said to the cabby, and then settled back for the ride, which was a lengthy one.

The night was dark and dense with a London fog, which penetrated to the interior of the cab, causing Valerie to seek the depths of the corner and draw her wraps more about her.

"Is the man mad?" she suddenly exclaimed, as the cab made several rapid turns to the vehicle which at times scarcely touched the earth in the street. "What on earth has taken possession of the fellow?"

Valerie tried to lower the window, but a pace by commanding the Jehu not to drive so fast. The vehicle was swaying from side to side as the driver seemed as if he could hear the horse's hoofs striking the pavement in showers of fire as he rushed on.

Suddenly she picked up her grip and broke the glass between her and the driver's seat.

"Not so fast there!" she shouted at the top of her voice. There is no necessity for such dangerous speed. You will overturn the cab and—"

Her words were broken by a terrible crash and the next moment she found herself stretched up in a mass of ruin.

There had been a collision, one of the natural results of a foolhardy drive, and Valerie heard the oaths of a man as she opened what remained of the door and crawled out.

Fortunately, she was not hurt, but well shaken and completely demoralized. Slightly she was caught by the arm and pulled forward.

"Why, here's a beauty upon my soul," cried the voice of the swearing man. "You ran down the wrong horse, my dear, you do, but I hope you're not hurt, my dear? That Jehu of yours ought to be brought before Old Bailey, but like his kind he's out of sight already. Now, about your light this way. Curse that infernal fog! I can't see a blessed cuz it with a knife. That's one of the blessings of London. Here we are. Well, I'll be hanged!"

The light which had been thrust into Valerie's white face by the burly driver of the cab had revealed her to the man who had spoken.

"You here in London, miss?" he exclaimed. "Well, this is luck and no mistake. Never expected to have the pleasure of meeting you under such circumstances."

By this time the girl had caught sight of the speaker and her heart seemed to rise in her throat.

GOITRE!

Remarkable Discovery That Cures This Dangerous and Disfiguring Disease Without Pain, Operation or Inconvenience.

A Trial Package Sent Free to All—A Home Remedy That Has Never Failed to Cure Goitre Permanently.

Dr. John P. Hale, a well-known Cincinnati physician, has had marvelous success with a remedy

that cures Goitre or Thick Neck. And owing to the fact that most sufferers believe Goitre is incurable, Dr. Hale will send a free trial package of his discovery so that patients may try and know positively that Goitre can be cured at home without pain, danger, operation or any inconvenience. Write to-day to Dr. John P. Hale, 1135 Dr. P. Hale Building, Cincinnati, O., and he will forward the treatment postage prepaid. Do not fail to get this wonderful remedy. In a few days, Dr. Hale says, 40,000 patients in that infected district were cured with his home remedy and wherever used its success has been marvelous.

Write at once, send name and address today and Dr. Hale will be glad to send you a trial package of the remedy free. Do not delay.

"Sir Reginald Henlow!" she exclaimed.

"That's me and no mistake, miss. You're alone, I suppose?"

"I'm quite alone, quite so, Sir Reginald."

"And not hurt? Now, that's good. It was a lucky collision, let me say, for both of us."

A shudder went through Valerie's frame. This man was the last person she wanted to encounter in London and stern fate had thrown them together. She saw that the tilted mountebank had been at his cups, for the smell of London liquor had reached her nostrils, and she shuddered again.

"I must get another cab to continue my journey," suddenly remarked Valerie.

"Another cab, nice miss? It was not much injured in the collision. I will see that you reach your destination safely. You were going to—to—"

"335 Courtenay."

"Yes, and it's not so far off, either. Here, Joey, pull the two cabs apart and mount the box. The young lady and I will take forthwith to her destination."

"Very good, Lord, Sir Reginald," said Valerie.

"Don't mention it, my little one," and as Valerie was helped to the vehicle Sir Reginald took a seat beside the driver.

The next moment he leaned toward the driver and whispered in his ear:

"By Jove! you made a deuced break to-night, Joey. A fine wine you at Stetson's scene. Who thought that such a prize would fall into my hands? A little faster, you pirate. I'm anxious to get there."

Ten minutes later the cab stopped and Sir Reginald sprang down and opened the little door. He helped Valerie out and received her up a flight of steps to a portal which he opened with a key.

"Right here, miss," said he, taking hold of Valerie's arm. "You are safe now."

The girl drew back, but the next second she was dragged across the threshold and the door locked behind her. She was trapped!

CHAPTER XI.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER.

For a moment Valerie's brain reeled. As the horror of her situation dawned upon her her whole strength left her. You will overt her, but at the same time she felt that now, if ever she needed the Mascot nerve.

Sir Reginald Henlow appeared to her in his true light, though she had held an indistinct picture of him for some time.

Now, as he faced her, gloating over the victory he had won, he appeared doubly a monster in human form.

"You will find this a nice place, my child," he said, patronizingly, and not overly concealing his real thoughts.

"But this is not a place where you are just as safe."

Valerie advanced toward the door.

"You will let me out at once," she commanded, turning upon the tilted wolf. "You will unlock the door at once and I will find Mrs. James without help."

"Don't be in a hurry to quit a nice place," responded Henlow. "I am glad to see you and this unexpected pleasure——"

"Your conduct is infamous, but, what more has one to expect. You have disgraced your title and I demand again to be let out of this trap."

Sir Reginald laughed and Valerie drew back from him with a flash in her eyes.

"I hope everything is moving nicely down at The Hall," he said.

The young girl did not speak.

"Must be lonely there just now."

Still no answer, Valerie looking at her tor-

mentor from near the door, the key of which Sir Reginald carried safely in his pocket.

"Aren't you going to let me out?" demanded Valerie again.

"You need rest. Wait, I'll call Mrs. Craigie. She will show you to a sumptuous room and beside get you supper, as you must be a little hungry after your ride up."

Valerie advanced toward Sir Reginald and suddenly covered him with her gloved right hand.

"I will not ask again to be let out of this infamous trap," she said, coolly. "The consequences attending my sojourn here be upon your head. I came to London for a purpose and you have seen fit to interfere with it. You are trying to balk justice and the law shall call you to account."

"All of which is pretty, my dear," was the reply. "Remember that you have fallen into the hands of one who adores you, and——"

"Silence!" almost thundered Valerie. "Such language here is entirely out of place. You failed of your mission the last time you were at Mascot Hall and you shall fail again. Will you open the door?"

"By and by, mine——"

"Now."

At this moment the door at the end of the hall opened and a woman of very unpleasing aspect stood before the heiress of Mascot.

"Come here, Mrs. Craigie," cried Sir Reginald, at sight of the angular, dark-faced woman whose eyes glittered like gems that adorned her head. "Here's a young lady friend of mine who will stop with us for a time, I decided. You will show her to your best spare bed room and—"

"You are not, madam, that I am not here of my own choosing," broke in Valerie. "I was basely trapped tonight and by that person who wrongly boasts that he is a gentleman."

Sir Reginald showed his teeth in a malicious grin.

"I don't him in all particulars" said the tall woman, making a bow to the titled mountebank.

"I don't doubt that; birds of a feather!" exclaimed the dead lord's daughter.

"Come, you need sleep. Tomorrow we will discuss the future," said Sir Reginald. "Mrs. Craigie, dear woman, will see that you are nicely treated while her. Take charge of her, Harriet."

The tall creature came forward, but Valerie drew back against the wall. There was menace in her manner and the other woman glanced at Henlow undecided.

"You need not show your blood," he said to Valerie. "It won't do you any good; so there!"

The hand of Mrs. Craigie clutched the girl's arm but she shook it off with a shudder, for it seemed to her that the head of a serpent had touched her.

"Don't touch me!" she exclaimed, facing the tall woman. "You are that monster's tool, and I must spend the night in this den."

But the heiress of Mascot Hall was practically helpless in the power of the pair, helpless and friendless in London, and suddenly her nerve seemed to give way and she retired back with a low cry.

"Quite!" cried Henlow. "Don't——"

Already the long arms of Harriet Craigie had entwined themselves about Valerie's waist and before she could touch the floor she was lifted off her feet and the tall woman was carrying her down the corridor.

Valerie's right still clung to her little grip, and when she disappeared Sir Reginald quietly lighted a perfecto and smiled like a victorious fiend.

"By Jove! The accident couldn't have been better done," he ejaculated. "I wonder what the other cabby will think when he comes to himself finds his fare nursing? What brought the girl to London anyhow? Something about the crime at The Hall, I presume. But she'll tell me tomorrow, for if I don't play this game to perfection throw me into the London hedge. You're a lucky dog, Sir Reggie, a very lucky canine," and he walked down the hall, rear at hand and threw himself upon a settee.

Mrs. Craigie seemed in no hurry to come back after taking Valerie upstairs.

Perhaps she was having more trouble with the girl or perhaps Valerie was making a traitress out of Mrs. Craigie with her arts and money.

Sir Reginald was about to quit the room for the purpose of investigating when he heard footsteps in the hall and fully expecting to see the housekeeper, he settled back on the soft cushions and watched the door.

When it opened he sprang to his feet with an oath for before him stood, not Mrs. Craigie, but a man whim he recognised at once.

"You!" he cried, "in heaven's name, what brings you here?"

"Come, don't go off like a spark of powder," grinned the other as he came forward with a swift glance around the room. "I'm not going to set fire to the house. I came on a bit of business that concerns us both. I'm alone. Larry couldn't come with me 'cause the fishes have business with his corpus in the Thames. You see, my lord——"

"But come to business at once and shut that door."

Thimbles, the thief, obeyed both commands, he shut one first, and turned again toward Sir Reginald.

"I want a little money," said he.

"You don't want to rob me, do you?" cried Reginald. "You know that I kept my part of the compact."

"Yes, but you see I've performed another valuable service and I ought to be paid for it."

"What have you done?" cried Henlow. "I've cheated the hounds."

"I don't understand you."

"I've throwed 'em off the scent."

Sir Reginald became more interested now. It seemed to dawn upon him that Thimbles had a claim on his purse.

"When did you do this?" he inquired.

"Night before last."

"Well, what did you do? Come, don't mince matters."

"I broke the scent," was the reply, and Thimbles came close to the titled rascal. "Donald Black, the Scotland Yarder, had the clue in his hands. I ran across him and played my hand like a hero. He knew all about the swag; he knew that you——"

"Heavens! you didn't let him go, did you, Thimbles?"

"Let' im go with Newgate staring us in the face?" cried the London thief.

"Yes, yes."

"I fixed his order, I broke the scent, I say, I want the second pounds, my lord."

"Where is the detective?" asked Sir Reginald.

The sensual lips of Thimbles seemed to touch Sir Reginald's ear.

"He's keepin' Larry company, and Larry is in the Thames."

The reckless lord drew his purse with a cool chuckle.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PREY OF THE THAMES.

Let us retrace our steps a little and follow the fortunes of Donald Black, who surprised Thimbles in the act of, that rogue turn on him like a lion brought to bay.

The detective was back to London from Mascot Hall with the determination to solve the mystery connected with Lord Basil's death and the theft of the Indian gems.

He would make all dark places light or know why not.

He had reasons for facing Thimbles and accusing that wretch of being one of the tools of Sir Reginald Henlow in the robbery of Mr. Hall.

Donald Black seldom made a professional mistake and this time he was sure none would be committed.

Sir Reginald had suddenly paid certain debts that had troubled him for some time and among them the one owed Berwick, the gentleman who, as the reader will recollect, followed him from the club after his return from Mascot Hall.

In private life Donald Black was David Berwick, and the moment the graceless lord placed the money in his hands he reasoned the source of the sudden wealth.

Then, a visit to the purlieus of Houndditch gave him a few other ideas, and, fortified with these, he came upon Thimbles in the latter's den and made the startling accusation.

Well might Thimbles grin when he bent over the figure of the detective after he had choked him into unconsciousness, if not dead, and congratulate himself upon getting rid of a troublesome enemy.

After looking at the body for a time he lifted it in his arms and bore it from the room.

The secret was his.

No one had witnessed the struggle; no human eye but his had seen how he had leaped upon Donald Black and borne him against the smoke wall, throttling him with his desperate fingers, and, thank fortune, clearing his way to future wealth.

Beyond the scene of the struggle Thimbles found another room and a dark one.

But he found another door there and this led to a corridor, to gain which he had to ascend a flight of six steps.

Thimbles had thrown the still limp body of the London ferret over his shoulder and carried it with ease, for he had the strength of a giant.

Once a trip in the dark, but at the end of the corridor Thimbles stopped and listened.

Presently he unlatched another door and crept out into the air with his burden.

The lights of London were glimmering around him.

Some of these lights moved and danced like fireflies over the bosom of a stream.

Thimbles knew where he was.

Perhaps he had gone there before on the same kind of mission.

He was on the embankment of the Thames, the mighty artery of London, and now he could see the lights of the water craft as they danced everywhere.

The wind was cool, but it did not disturb the thief.

For a moment he put his burden down and looked right and left.

Not far away he saw the dark spans of a bridge and the glowing lights upon it.

"Good bye," said Thimble with a chuckle.

"Yes, yes."

"I fixed his order, I broke the scent, I say, I want the second pounds, my lord."

"Where is the detective?" asked Sir Reginald.

The sensual lips of Thimbles seemed to touch Sir Reginald's ear.

"He's keepin' Larry company, and Larry is in the Thames."

The reckless lord drew his purse with a cool chuckle.

But no one was near.

"You won't find Larry, mebbe, but you can go and look for him," said Thimbles, as he turned to the body which he had picked up with ease.

He did not try to despoil the detective.

It was a great temptation for him, but he resolutely kept his hands from the watch and the pocketbook.

"I'll think he fell in unawares," thought Thimbles, as he crept towards the water's edge.

The swish of the cold tide would have sent a shudder to other hearts than his; the set expression of the detective's face would have haunted other eyes than Thimbles', but his, never!

As the shrill shriek of a steamer's whistle rang in his ears Thimbles darted toward the water, and, halting on the very rringe, he tossed the burden from him.

He heard it strike and for a second he leaned forward as the waves caught it in their arms and drew it down, down into the darkness of eternal night.

"Good-by," said Thimbles, with a chuckle, as he straightened and crept back.

A few minutes later he was in the room where Sir Reginald had taken place.

The fluttering candle, which some one had exchanged for a lamp, threw a weird light around the room and Thimbles picked up the black bottle that set beside it.

It was all he could do to extract the merest portion of vile liquor from the bottle, as he threw it down with a curse and darted from the den.

But what had the waters done?

They had taken to the thief's victim; but had they been as merciless?

Scarcely had they received the body of the detective ere a man came out of the shadows not far off and halted where Thimbles had stood.

"I could not have been mistaken," said this person, who was youthful, with a good pair of shoulders and bright, black eyes. "I saw someone here and heard a splash as if he threw something into the river. Was it a murderer hiding the evidences of his crime? Was it some thief—"

The light of a passing boat fell upon the latter where the young man stood.

As it did so the stranger sprang to the river's edge and looked out.

"That's it, out there on the waves," he cried. "I wonder how deep the tide is here? Well, no matter; I'll find out."

He threw his coat upon the ground and plunged in without more ado.

It did not take him long to reach the object he had seen in the waters.

The waves were tossing it up and down like an old hat and the rescuer caught up with it in a jiffy.

"It's a man, just as I thought," he exclaimed, as he fastened his strong fingers in the clothes. "Now, comes the tug of war," and he drew the body to him with a tugging with all his might.

It was a fierce struggle, but he won.

He pulled the body upon the bank and panting sent out a cry.

"Not so bad as I thought," he ejaculated. "A little more, though, and I wouldn't have been able to effect this rescue. I wonder who he is? Well, never mind, he's a human being and that's enough for me to know."

The speaker then proceeded to bring the man back to life, and in this was successful.

The cold douche had revived Donald Black and the manipulations he received at his rescuer's hands brought him round in pretty fair shape.

The young man proceeded to put on his coat while the detective sat up and watched him curiously.

"It was a close pull, wasn't it, sir?" said the stranger, coming up to Black. "I'm glad to be of service to you. Somebody must have had a grudge."

"Well, yes," said a faint smile played with Black's face. "He wasn't as gentle as a lamb. But, by the way, to whom do I owe my life?"

"In the first place, who are you?" asked the youth.

"That shall be no secret to you. I am Donald Black of Scotland Yard."

"I see. No wonder you went into the river tonight," smiled the rescuer.

"That's right. And you——"

"I'll be fair, too. I am Max Masterson." Donald Black started in surprise at the accustomed coolness.

"Max Masterson of Mascot Hall?" he said.

"Yes, sir."

The detective held out his hand, which was taken in a hearty grasp, and the two men standing on the bank of the Thames looked into each other's faces, wondering perchance what strange chance had brought them together and dreamless of what the future had in store for them.

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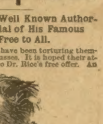

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STORY OF A MEMORABLE NIGHT ON THE RAIL

BY MARO O. ROLFE.

Begun in No. 8, February 24. Subscriptions can begin with that number, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XXV.

"THE ROCKET EXPRESS IS COMING."

Mainhall and Burd, standing by the track and waiting for Fincastle to join them were surprised to see the two locomotives reversed almost at the same instant.

The engine coming up the line was yet too far away for them to see what Fincastle had seen—what had caused him to hurl himself on the lever with the frantic abandon of a madman—and they were at a loss to account for his unexpected departure from a pleas ant walk and so accounting of good results.

"Curse him!" gritted Mainhall. "He has failed me at the critical moment. We now have a fight with the men on that engine on our hands and not the best chance in the world to intercept the Rocket Express. I'm ready for it though, but it is a pity Burd has not Fincastle's revolver."

"Look!" cried Burd. "They're going to smash together after all, and see! There's a young lady on that engine. Would have have been a pity to send her to such a fate. I'm glad Fincastle weakened."

The two locomotives came together with a crash that demolished their cow-catchers and crushed their pilots and cabs and threw on both of them a terrible shaking up. But no one was hurt so far as was apparent and neither engine was injured in such a way as to impair its usefulness.

Mainhall saw five men and the young woman in whom Burd had called his attention scramble down beside the track.

The next instant he recognized the leader of the party as Jacques Marple and saw Fincastle rush up to the party firing as he advanced.

One of the train robbers fell over into the ditch and was to all appearances dead, and the superintendent had shot another of them, in the shoulder and caused him to drop his revolver and run howling down the track.

"I was wrong again and Fincastle is a daisy!" cried Mainhall, and with a shout of defiance he hurried to the fray.

He fired right and left with his two revolvers, and the train-robbers fled before the fire his impetuous advance. He stooped over again and picked up the revolver that had fallen from the hand of the fellow Fincastle had wounded and threw it to Burd, who, thus armed, gained a place at his side just as Fincastle dashed forward and embraced the young woman, who received swooning into his arms.

The superintendent caught the girl's insensible form and, holding her as he had been wont to do when she was a child and he slept on his bosom, he ran with her to a place behind his engine where she would be out of range of the revolvers.

Then, as she opened her eyes and looked into his face and knew him, he said:

"Stay here till I come back, Grace. Mind."

Without another word he ran back over his shoulder to shoulder with Mainhall and Burd, again faced the train-robbers, shouting iron in hand:

"The man in front of you is Denton Marple!" cried Mainhall. "Don't let him get the drop on you!"

"Traitor!" hissed Marple, firing point blank at Mainhall yet missing him.

"Traitor indeed!" Fincastle. "It was you that came near making me my daughter's assassin!"

Now that Mainhall understood. He had not until that moment suspected that the young woman was Miss Grace Marple, for he not believed Marple would endanger her life as he had done.

There was a cessation of shooting. But Denton Marple recovered Mainhall with a revolver and, as his finger touched the trigger, cried hoarsely:

"Traitor! Your time has come!"

Mainhall let his hands, each holding a revolver, fall by his sides.

"Kill me if you want to," he said calmly. "I am waiting for you to do it. See, I make no resistance."

If Fincastle and Burd wondered when they heard Mainhall speak these words and behind him so much enraged from his defiant and desperate fighter that had had reason to believe him, they wondered still more at the effect of his speech and manner on Denton Marple.

The big man train-robbers turned his back on Mainhall and walked away a few steps, his face bearing an expression of the deepest disgust and contempt.

"No," he said, "I will not shoot you Mr. Fincastle calls you a traitor too. If he got fit to shoot you like the dog you have made of yourself, his acquaintance will do for both of us. But you three men are our prisoners!"

"When you take us!" replied Fincastle. "Not before! We are six worse off than three to three!"

Denton Marple put one hand back of his ear and, looking down the line, listened intently. As he did so, Fincastle covered him with his revolver, and Burd and Mainhall covered his two companions with theirs.

"You and Mr. Mainhall here may have a little delicacy about shooting each other," said Fincastle, "but I don't think very much of either of you. As things stand, you three would-be murderers are our prisoners, and we are not poets, for we have the drop on you. It may be, however, that Mr. Mainhall prefers to fight on the other side. If so, there will be no good room for him to get in your ranks," and he cast upon Mainhall such a look of loathing as Denton Marple had given him.

"I had no more knowledge of your daughter's presence on that engine than you had, Mr. Fincastle," replied Mainhall earnestly. "I started to see this job through and I will serve your cause as ably and honestly as I can, in spite of you."

"The Rocket Express is coming," said Marple, still listening intently.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DR. LESLIE'S SPECIAL.

"Yes, gentlemen," continued Denton Marple calmly, "the Rocket Express is coming and it will be upon us when it runs against these two engines."

Mainhall, as calm as Marple, quietly turned his second revolver on the rascal that had been holding it.

"The lantern! Quick!" he called out to Burd. "You must stop that train!"

Burd sprang into the cab of the engine, lighted the red lantern and, clearing the track of the men, stood waving it down the track in the direction of the approaching train.

Before he had taken six long leaping steps, he felt the muzzle of a revolver in his face and a stern voice say:

"No you don't! Drop the lantern and hands up!"

The train-robber whom Fincastle had shot in the shoulder had crept away behind the sneaked back and armed himself with the revolver he had dropped in his flight.

The lantern did not fall out of Burd's grasp. It was jerked out, and Grace Fincastle, emerging from the cab, ran back down the track toward the approaching headlight.

Denton Marple shouted at her hoarsely, but she did not heed him. Then as the other fell to work carry her and the rapidly waving red lantern made a fiery circle about her head.

The train came to a sudden stop and men came running to the rescue from the cars and to the alarm.

"Thank God!" she said earnestly. "Thank heaven for the safety of the Rocket Express!"

But that is not the Rocket Express," said the train-robber to whom she was apparently a leader among the men from the train.

"What is it then?" she asked.

"A special, and many lives do you are."

"Miss Fincastle. Now who are you?"

"My name is Dr. Leslie. Where is your father? I am looking for him; came round the other train. Where is he?" and she had switched on to this track a little below here.

"Father is up there by those engines, and he very busy. If any of you have guns, you'd do well to go and help him," she said, though he was having a little the best of it when I came away."

"I have brought fifty men with guns. Miss Fincastle, and if there is an arsenal, I will have them up this way in a minute. I will send a man to run back to the train, but she stopped him.

"The Rocket Express will be along soon," she said, "and there is no time to fool."

Three minutes later Denton Marple and his companions were prisoners, bound hand and foot. The revengeful chief of the train-robbers was left with a lock in his baleful eyes which Fincastle interpreted to mean:

"You are not done with me yet."

"Come here, Mr. Fincastle," called out Mainhall, who was over the ditch with the train-robber. "This man you killed was trying to shoot you from behind in the next hundred."

"True!" Fincastle shuddered. "Too bad he was not in better business."

Fincastle's command thrust into one of the coaches of Dr Leslie's special train, and then the special and the two locomotives were taken a short way up the line to where there were switching facilities.

"The bridge over the river is gone," said Fincastle as he as Dr Leslie threw themselves into the cab of the engine that the Rocket Express round the way you came."

"No, you'll save fifty miles by going over the abandoned T. H. & S. T track. It's in good order for a few miles and you'll use it to get to the W. H. & C. Short Line," replied Dr. Leslie. "You will save an hour's time miles this side of Dalymple river. have fixed everything for you and a section gang with a handcar will have gone over the old track to insure absolute safety before the train gets there. I came round this way to outwit Denton Marple and his men and will send any train back that may follow. crew and go up with my men on the Rocket Express to keep you company and guard the train."

"But we're threatened with trouble and the telegraph line is down."

"It is repaired and I just got a message clear through to town and the operator can tell you to a minute when the Rocket Express will be in," said Dr Leslie reassuringly. "Beside we have the chief of the train robbers a prisoner and I have a score of army of detectives armed to the teeth and able to repel any attack that can be made. Things are coming our way on the run now, Fincastle. I hurried down here to help you out, at Mr. Leitsham's request, and my man Hawley's working on this plot and will be able to tell us a lot about it when we get in."

Fincastle was reassured. The Rocket Express would arrive in fifteen minutes. He looked his engineers in a freight room and sent De Lisle's special back the way it had come, and very much against her earnest protest Miss Fincastle was sent back on it.

"Don't you want me to tell you," she asked, "how Burd happened to be with you, Mr. Marple planned to get me in his power and how, with the assistance of a miserable tool of his who posed as Mrs. Graham, he made it quite likely that you would be shot? I was locked up in that hotel and released by old Bob Graham, and then how that dreadful Marple rushed in and said you and me believe I was going to be taken home on the engine and drawn into a head-on collision? I don't believe he really meant to harm me, but he wanted me to help him frighten you and I guess he succeeded in that. Besides, as matters turned out, he came near getting me killed. But he was very nice about it all."

"So long a story now, my dear." And Fincastle kissed her and bundled her on the train just as it was pulling out and when he had kissed her again and freed himself from her, he was the old Fincastle in form and saw something that looked good to him.

What he saw was the Rocket Express!

CHAPTER XXVII.

A DEVIL'S RIDE.

The superintendent hurried forward to question the conductor and engineer of the Rocket Express.

"Are you all right up to the present time?" he asked.

"All right."

"And what made you so late?"

"A house on the track at Boomtonville."

"How was that?"

"They had started to move the building from one part of the village to another, but got it stuck on the car tracks and we had to wait for him to move it on."

"Is Marple with you and some of his men?"

"Yes, except that we couldn't get any wires anywhere up the line. We wired round about, but got no answer."

"Well," was Fincastle's comment, "you got off easy."

Then he sought the express messenger.

"Have you any more five hundred thousand all safe?" he inquired.

"Seventy-five hundred, sir."

"Good! And no trouble of any kind?"

"None."

"And nothing suspicious has occurred?"

"Not a thing."

"Then prepare to put some armed men in the express car for the rest of the run," said Fincastle authoritatively, as he turned up the line and I have had a very lively night of it."

As he walked down the platform, Fincastle met Mainhall.

"Mr. Mainhall," he said, "I think I misjudged you again."

"Quite possibly."

"I know I did you, for a short time," he replied, "but you can count on me now in the train, and for that reason they will pick you off first. There is no other way. Besides it will be daylight soon and the line will be open up as far as Floating City. It will be suicide for Marple to throw off. Then we'll see that no signal is given to any one to obstruct the track ahead. Even now I'm convinced no one will venture to make any attempt to stop us."

"You wouldn't want to see him at liberty, eh?" Fincastle asked insinuatingly.

"No."

"So I think."

"Well, would you?"

"My reasons for wanting him kept safe may differ from your reasons, Fincastle," Fincastle.

"He would kill you if given a chance," warned Mainhall.

"I am sure he would, but I will keep him and his companions safe enough," declared Fincastle. "Let us not forget we have a watchman of the night at Floating City?"

"Yes—you mean that old man, the amateur engineer?"

"I am sure he may depended upon to keep his eyes open and to see anything that threatens the village and its people and to send a warning alarm; and, after his former experience as a victim of blundering that has not occurred, I don't believe he would give a false alarm intentionally."

"Likely not," laughed Mainhall; "on the contrary, his pronounced failure may make him over-cautious about new warnings of danger."

Fincastle and Dr. Leslie held a hurried conference in which all chances and probabilities were duly considered.

This was followed by fifteen minutes of hustle and preparation, which kept Fincastle, Dr. Leslie and his men, the train crew and every available person on the station busy.

Calls of the plan by Fincastle and who said log of baggage and express cars, coaches, sleepers and locomotives, incident to the reorganization of the train, with no little interest.

The locomotive known in this narrative as the stolen engine was to go up the line a little in advance of the train, as a "hook-out" and in order to impress the followers of Denton Marple with a conviction that his plans were duly carried out.

It was suggested by Fincastle that Marple might, perhaps to some advantage to the train, be chained in the cab of the advance locomotive where he might be advantageous men, who would naturally refrain from any attack on the engine through fear of bringing harm to their leader.

"That will never do," was Mainhall's prompt answer, "for if Marple is on that engine he will find a way to give a signal at Floating City what will bring disaster to the train. You know that signal must never be given, Mr. Fincastle."

Mr. Mainhall is right," said De Lisle. "We will keep Mr. Marple and his associates tied up good and tight and take them up in a closed freight car, so that they can see no one outside and no one outside can see them. That is the only way to deal with such people—never give them any chance to get the best of you, for that's what they're looking for if they get any sort of grams they get into."

And so the prisoners were disposed of.

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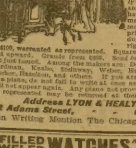

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When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

Denton Marple made no complaint. It was evident that he had a heart for any fate. He took his place in the freight car with a cool indifference that was a surprise to Fincastle. But Mainhall, who knew Marple better than the superintendent did, thought he saw a devil looking out of the eyes of the chief of train-robbers!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AT DAWN OF DAY.

In a quiet, business-like way, the passengers were told that an accident to the road necessitated the running of an light a train at midnight and that the sleepers would be abandoned at the second station. Such an order to sleep and were in no hurry could wait in their berths for the next train. Those who wanted to go on without delay must take the day coaches ahead before the train resumed its way after the second stop. Two of the four day coaches were cut out then and there, two of the baggage cars were left and all the express in two cars was crowded into one. The train was made up as follows: The locomotive that had hauled it from the lower end of the division, the mail, express and baggage cars and day coaches; the locomotive that Fincastle and Burd had brought down the line; the freight car in which the prisoners were confined; the sleepers, soon to be left behind.

The engine that Marple and his men had stolen from old Bob Graham left under instructions to keep no more than a quarter of a mile ahead of the train. A trusted engineer and a Burd were in charge.

About two minutes after its departure, the forward express resumed its journey up the line. Every one of its platforms was crowded with the armed detectives whom Dr. Lisle had brought down on this special train with the amount and co-operation of Oliver Lathaw, president of the P. Q. & M. S. railway.

Fincastle, Mainhall and the secret agent had a brief conference after the train was under way.

"I think," said the superintendent, "we are starting in proof shape."

"Couldn't be better" was De Lisle's indorsement. "If they want war, we're to accommodate them."

"We're pretty well guarded, don't you think so, Mainhall?" asked Fincastle.

"No armed force can prevail against us," was Mainhall's answer. "Sure."

He hesitated and continued mentally:

"Fincastle, danger. That's why you could not avert, dangers that would send an army to death, helpless and resistless."

Fincastle and his companions knew of what Mainhall was thinking, but they had little fear that there would be trouble at Floating City. Besides, Mainhall himself had said he did not believe that there would be any difficulty there without a signal from the stolen locomotive. There would be no signal, and Joseph Hunt, the engineer, was an old man on the road, who had been long tried and never been found wanting, and Fincastle knew that Burd would not "only" the engine through in the best manner but could be relied upon in any emergency. And the opportunity after passing Floating City he would put on another engineer and fireman to relieve them.

Mainhall would not admit that he feared a catastrophe at Floating City, but he said a few words to the effect that all had been planned and there was a chance that, despite the great care they were taking to guard against it, some accident might precipitate it.

The sky was a dull gray and the moon was hidden by a bank of clouds. Gradually the gray shade lifted and lighter, then the clouds on the eastern horizon took on a whitened look that was warmed into a slowly deepening purple. It was 5 o'clock on a fair summer morning which promised to usher in a sultry day.

The train was yet forty miles from Floating City but, barring mishaps, it would be there in an hour.

Everyone who realized that there was any danger was alert and watchful. De Lisle's detectives were ready for an emergency. Fincastle was everywhere on the train, attending to everything that he had to attend to and seeing that every subordinate did the same. Mainhall was so self-contained that no one might have imagined this was to him a mere vacation trip.

It had been deemed best not to alarm the passengers needlessly. The train crew had been intended to tell them nothing of the night's troubles on the upper part of the line. Yet, somehow, with all these precautions, some inkling of the state of affairs had found a way to the consciousness of the more leading ones among them, and as the Rocket Express began to descend into the gorge in which lay the "freak" city that had been built on a raft by Ezekiel Honeyman when it had no mission but to tempt Providence, and began to crane their necks to get a view of the hamlet and of the reservoir that was a menace to it and to exchange information as to its history and opinions as to how it would end. The prevailing opinion was that it would either burst or blow away or rot down, raft and houses in one indistinguishable mass of decay. No one suggested that it was in the slightest danger from water.

Yet many of the passengers would have owned to a vague foreboding as they felt the train gilding further down into the gully.

Fincastle and Mainhall were on the lookout and De Lisle, who had not seen the canvas planted on the bluff and consequently was not strongly impressed with the idea that there could be had a thought of battering down the wall of the reservoir and submerging the train in that deep and narrow place, went about among his armed detectives and cautioned them to hold themselves in readiness to shoot any man or men who might attempt any devilry of any kind before they should get out into open country again.

The run would not rise for a quarter of an hour, but it was sending long streaks of light skyward.

Hunt and Burd, from the advance locomotive, could see the two cannon and the men who had them in charge. One of the men watched the approaching engine and train from a superior elevation.

Hunt and Burd were careful to do nothing that he could construe as a signal.

Just as the train was passing the reservoir, this man waved his hand at arm's length above his head.

Then not two cannon, but six, at different points, spoke simultaneously, a hundred feet of the reservoir wall was crushed in and the water fell, like a cataract, over into the gully.

(Completed in next week's Ledger.)

Prettiest Birds.

The most variegated bird in the world is the Pitta Bengalensis, which is found in India and Ceylon, and the plumage of which no fewer than nine different colors are distinguishable, and which, in consequence, has been called the nine-colored pitta. With its long legs, short tail and plump body it looks considerable resemblance to a thrush. Its colors are gay and beautifully harmonized. Its powerful long beak is curved on top and is generally held firmly closed. The foot is widely spread, the middle toe very long. The wings are short and well rounded. The bird is a fleet runner. A black stripes on the upper part of its body. The head and sides of the neck are black, while a white line passes over the eyes, forming a kind of eyebrow, and the throat and part of the back are also white. The other parts under the body are a yellowish brown, with a greenish tinge. The tail and under parts of the wings are bright scarlet. The tops of the wings are a bluish green, while the long wing feathers are a pale blue. The tips of the shoulders are also pale blue, and the pinions are black. Their short wings do not permit of any extended flight, and their long legs show that much of their time is passed on the ground. They feed on different kinds of beetles, which they crush with their strong beaks, a specimen of which is placed in the Berlin Zoological garden.

Docility's Reward.

"We're going to be good to you," said the tax collector.

"We're not," answered the Porto Rican.

"We're going to show you the benefits of a broad civilization. We're going to attempt to teach you to progress to higher planes of thought and nobler ideals of duty."

"Yes, sir."

"We're going to teach you to pay taxes in a way to please Uncle Sam."

"Yes, sir."

And, above all, impress on you the facts that the love of money is the root of all evil and that you can't serve two masters."

"Yes, sir," said the Porto Rican. "Thank you ever so much. We will never forget you."

COFFEE vs. PREACHER.

"People Poisoned by Coffee Should Leave It Off"

"I have been a coffee drinker for years and it has kept me in a bilious condition, with more or less headache, as the result of mental ill-health produced by coffee drinking. I have discovered that coffee is a rank poison to my system. Since we have been using Postum Cereal Food Coffee we not only have health restored, but have with all the good qualities of coffee, but it has none of the injurious effects.

"A person suffering from nervous trouble, caused by the poison of coffee, should be able to get rid of the sickness in short order if such a one will leave off the cause and take up Postum Food Coffee. There has been no coffee used in our home for a considerable time.

"People who are poisoned by coffee should leave it off, because, when on a regular job, he dishonors God, 'for our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost.' It would seem that any one conscious of the bodily distress that coffee brings, would have no trouble in doing it off when Postum Food Coffee can be secured." Rev. John M. Linn, Pastor M. E. Church, South Corpus Christi, Texas.

Training Dogs.

In Berlin one Herr Strauss has established an academy from which watch dogs are turned out by the hundred every year.

His system is educational, and is applied to almost every kind of dog. He first teaches the animal obedience by training it to perform certain "tricks" at command, and then trains it to distinguish between a visitor and a burglar, and what part of a man's body should be attacked to render the man helpless.

Outside of the gate the trainer places a dummy representing the burglar, and to the latch is attached a string. By means of the string the gate is opened slowly, until the head of the dummy becomes visible, when the dog is taught to fly at his throat. Herr Straus is very particular about this; he makes his dogs attack the throat or the upper part of the body always. Sometimes a real man, well padded, takes the place of the dummy, and, of course, he is well paid for his services.

All dogs, it seems, may be made good watch dogs, but the St. Bernards and the Russian wolfhounds are the best where property of great value is to be guarded. For dogs not so fierce as they are a different system of training is used. They soon learn to guard anything committed to their care, but are not so quick to attack an intruder as the fiercer dogs are.

A Serious Drawback.

Bramble—Do you believe that honesty is the best policy?

Thorne—It may be the safest, but there isn't much money in it.

Extremes Meet.

Johnny—I was next to the head of my class today.

Father—Good. How did it happen?

Johnny—We was standing in a circle.

Cures Weak Men Free

Insures Love and Happiness.

How any man may quickly cure himself after years of suffering from sexual weakness, lost vitality, varicocele, stricture and shame; small weak organs to full size and vigor. Simply send your name and address to Dr. R. V. Knapp, 163 Hull Bldg., Detroit, Mich., and he will gladly send the free receipt with full directions so that any man may easily cure himself at home. This is certainly a most generous offer and the following extracts taken from his daily mail show how men write him.

"Dear Sir:—Please accept my sincere thanks for yours of recent date. I have given your treatment a thorough trial and must say it has been extraordinary. It has completely built me up. I am now a perfect specimen when it toy and you cannot realize how glad I am to say so. My varicocele is entirely healed and beautifully. Results are marvelous. My old time strength and vigor have completely returned and enlargement in entirely gone. Yours, etc."

"Dear Sir:—Yours was received and I had no trouble in curing myself. The result is as stated, after a few days use can truthfully say it is a law of nature. Small organs have improved in size, strength and vigor. Yours, etc."

Treatment sent free, in strictly confidential, mailed in plain sealed envelope. The receipt is free for the asking and he wants every man to have it.

COE'S ECZEMA CURE $1 at druggists, or, box of 6, $5. Coe Mfg. Co., Cleveland, O.
When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

MARRIAGE PAPER—Best Published—Free. E. W. Richardson, Ohio.
When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

Tape-Worm expelled alive; head guaranteed; no fasting. Book free. DR. BYRON FIELD & CO., 183 State St., Chicago
When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

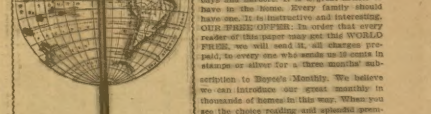
OPIUM and Liquor Habit cured in 10 to 20 days. No pay till cured. DR. J. E. KEELEY INSTITUTE CO., Dept. 19 Y, Lebanon, Ohio.
When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

CANCER IS CURABLE HOME TREATMENT. Free. 2 Ramos Medical Co., 181 W. 42d St., New York.
When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

WE SELL BUGGIES SURREYS, CARRIAGES, LIGHT HARNESS, ALL KINDS OF VEHICLES and HARNESS cheaper than any other house in the country. Send for catalogue. We are a two-year bidding guarantee, and we will save you from $10 to $25 on a buggy. SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO., Chicago.
When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

$5 BICYCLES CHEAPER THAN EVER

Model, 1900 Ranger, fully guaranteed, $15.75. Other bicycles $7 to $12. Second hand wheels $3 to $5. Write for our free bicycle catalogue and special offer. Do not buy a bicycle or a sundry of any kind from anyone at any price until you get our catalogue and offer. Cycle Dealers Supply House. CHICAGO CYCLE CO., Dept. R, Chicago, U. S. A. Mention this paper.
When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.


FREE! SEND NO MONEY
TO LADIES, BOYS AND GIRLS.
We send this elegant solid gold or sterling silver watch, warranted by factory, with a dainty Vest Chain and key, also 6 extra gold or silver Filled Rings, absolutely free to any girl or boy who will sell 12 Initial gold filled Lockets (your choice) at 10c each. Write us and we will send you the Lockets postpaid. When sold send us $1.20 and we will send you the watch, chain and rings by return mail. You can sell with an ordinary effort or several hours. Only one watch to a customer. Write us today, we mean it, and we will send you the Free postpaid. After you sell them and get the watch, chain and rings, you will be glad you sent for them. Then you can have your choice of one of these premiums. You can have a Solid Gold Ring with your initial engraved on it, or a Gold Filled Watch, or a Gold Filled Chain, or a Gold Filled Bracelet, or a Gold Filled Pin, or a Fine Silk Muff, or a Fine Silk Scarf, or a Fine Silk Fan, or a Fine Silk Parasol, or a Fine Silk Umbrella, or a Fine Silk Waist Pattern, or a Fine Silk Dress Pattern, or a Fine Silk Skirt Pattern, or a Fine Silk Shawl, or a Fine Silk Waist, or a Fine Silk Dress, or a Fine Silk Skirt

Same Dream.

Algy—I dreamt last night that I died.
Ethel—Yes? Your sister told me she heard you crying out for water in your sleep.

How's This?

We offer One Hundred Dollars Reward for any case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure.

F. J. CHENEY & CO., Props., Toledo, O.

We, the undersigned, have known F. J. Cheney for the last 15 years, and believe him perfectly honorable in all business transactions, and financially able to carry out any obligation made by their firm.

WEST & TRUAX, Wholesale Druggists, Toledo, O.

WALDING, KINNAN & MARVIN, Wholesale Druggists, Toledo, O.

Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Price 75c. per bottle. Sold by all Druggists. Testimonials free.

Hall's family Pills are the best.

Next.

Miss Goldrox—You don't seem to have much regard for Count Spaghetti. What do you know of him?

Mr. Peppery—Nothing of my personal knowledge, but some of my friends used to know him quite well.

Miss Goldrox—Then you never met him before?

Mr. Peppery—Oh, no, I've always shaved myself.

A Big Drop in Bicycles.

A happy surprise is in store for all bicycle riders, for several makers of well known high grade bicycles, as well as some makers of cheaper grades, have placed their entire output in the hands of one house, to be sold direct to the riders every where at the lowest prices ever known. For special prices, that will be lower than bicycles were ever before advertised or sold at, and for a free trial and pay after received offer, cut this notice out and mail to SEARS, ROEBUCK & Co., (INC.), Chicago, Ill.

Disgraceful.

Sunday School Teacher—Don't you know what is meant by "Grace before meat?" What does your father say when the family sits down to table?

Willie—He generally says, "Well, what the deuce is this stuff?"

His Grudge Against Rum.

"Ah, my friend," sighed the reformer, "rum causes lots of trouble in this world."

"Indeed, it does," agreed the listener.

"No doubt you or I would be happier were it not for the rum demon," went on the reformer.

"Indeed, we would," again agreed the patient listener.

"And how has it caused your unhappiness?" asked the reformer.

"Years ago a woman told me that if I stopped drinking she would marry me."

"And you could not stop?"

"No," roared the patient listener; "No, I did stop!"

A Good Road to Cincinnati.

The Monon Route and C. H. & D. R'y run four trains daily from Chicago to Cincinnati. The day trains leave Dearborn station, Chicago, at 8:30 a. m. and 11:45 a. m., and are equipped with elegant Parlor and Dining cars. The night trains leave at 8:30 p. m. and 2:45 a. m. Equipped with elegant sleepers and compartment cars, the sleepers on the latter train being ready for occupancy at 9:30 p. m. Ask for tickets via Monon and C. H. & D. City Ticket Office, 232 S. Clark street.

Gentility.

Reginald had a purpose in keeping the tryst punctually.

He came at the appointed hour. Beatrice was not there.

The minutes sped. Reginald waited until 30 of these had speeded.

Then he heaved a sigh of relief.

"She is half an hour late, at least!" he exclaimed, with glistenig eyes. "She is not bourgeois, after all!"

The qualities of real gentility inevitably betray themselves, sooner or later.

Subtract the First.

McJigger—I understand Jack has turned over a new leaf.

Thingumbob—I don't belive it.

McJigger—I heard he was working for his father for all he was worth.

Thingumbob—Your informant used too many "fors."

Want Ad Illustrated.

A CASHIER WANTED.

Poetic Pessimism.

Once upon a time a poet, with much sorrow, contemplated a farmer of today.

"Ah, the man with the hoe!" sighed the poet, dejectedly.

"Hoe?" exclaimed the farmer of today. "Don't you know the difference between a hoe and a golf club?"

Here he lofted, dignifiedly, and landed on the green.

This fable teaches that the poet often takes a gloomy view of things.

Mrs. Jackson—How is dis? A pail of cinders an' ashes.
Mrs. Murphy—Faix, whin I borrowed the loan av a pail av coal didn't I say I'd return it to yez—an' here it is.

Mrs. Smith—Dear, is my headgear all right?
Mr. Smith—Yes; the wheels appear to be running about the same as usual.

The Hero's Predicament.

Nowhere, it is likely, does the course of true love run more unsmoothly than in grand opera.

"Be mine!" roars the hero, with tolerable distinctness.

"M—er—yuh—uh!" shrieks the heroine, culminating an arpeggio in the upper register with a prolonged trill on the C in alt.

"Oh, this terrible uncertainty!" protests the hero.

The beautiful girl regards him yearningly; she would speak, only everything has to be sung in grand opera, and then, too, her maidenly reserve restrains her more or less.

Koon Tracks.

Before Marriage—"Isabell, I ain't no millionaire, an yo' know, but dis heart o' mine tells me dat if yo' marry me you'll hobbe nev to put yo'r little hands in dish water."

After Marriage—"But dat ain't dish water, Isabell, dat's soapsuds, an' you's doin' as well as de most extinguished husband could dispect."

Boy's Secret Society—Membership Free.

Any boy can join the C. M. A. free. It is the great original and only secret society for boys under 21 years of age. It has grips, signs, passwords, badges, secret emblems, secret ballgames, funny initiations, etc. The society is chartered by law, and has nothing in it to (?) injure anybody, or to offend churches or politics. Thousands of members everywhere. Costs nothing. Does not sell when you are a member by certain signs, grips, passwords, badges and the names of several boys you think would like to join. Enclose stamp. Address THE STAR, 126 Harlan Street, Oak Park, Ill.

The Roundabout Way.

"You have three brothers, haven't you?" he inquired.

"Yes," she answered. "Why?"

"Oh, I was just wondering if you would like to make me a fourth?"

"I'm very sorry," she replied, "but I will be a wife to you."

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic. 25 cents a bottle.

Useless, If Stationary.

"Yes, your highness," said the aide, "and shall I post this proclamation in a conspicuous place?"

"No," replied Aguinaldo, "you'd better have enough copies printed to give one to each man, so that all who run may read."

Of a Truth.

"Seven dollars and fifty cents for a book like that!" exclaimed the young man, putting his purse back in his pocket. "Why, that costs like sin."

"My young friend," said the elderly book agent, "there is nothing that costs like sin."

Grinding Monarchy.

"The British want ground," shouted the Boer sympathizer.

"Well, go on," said the man who cuts meat during working hours. ("What do they want ground? Sausage, flour or knives? Be explicit."

Genuine Temerity.

Blobbs—Buggins has considerable confidence in himself, hasn't he?

Slobbs—Confidence! Why, I have actually heard him attempt to argue with his son, who is just out of college.

Couldn't Be a Craze.

Winks—Your friend Jones is one of the finest pianists I ever heard. Why don't he go on the stage?

Minks—Wouldn't pay. His name is too easy to pronounce.

TO CURE A COLD IN ONE DAY
Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund the money if it fails to cure. E. W. GROVE'S signature is on each box. 25c.

I.

"Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go."

II.

Until Mary bought a "bike."

STORYETTES.

Pretty Little Story.

"Are you a pawnbroker?"

It was a woman dressed in the deepest mourning, and the voice gave the man behind the counter a curious sensation.

"I am," he said as soon as he could control his fluttering heart.

"Alas, that I should be driven to this!" sobbed the woman as she advanced a step. "Tonight—tonight I must either part with my wedding ring or be driven from the Arlington hotel. Oh, sir, you cannot imagine my feelings!"

"But do not give way," he replied in a voice full of deepest sympathy and respect.

"Is it possible that you will aid me?" she asked as she threw aside her veil and showed a Grecian face stained with tears.

"It is possible. In fact, you can depend on it. I was born that way and couldn't help it if I would. How much money do you need?"

"I dare not tell you."

"Speak up, lady."

"I—I ought to have at least $50, but, oh, sir, of course, you can't advance——"

"But I would scorn to take your wedding ring as a pledge," he interrupted. "Here is $400. That will keep you at the hotel for a week or so, and if you want to remain longer come and see me again. Never mind about the security. If you can pay me some time you may do so, but don't worry about it."

"Oh, sir, how can I ever——

"You needn't try. You came here thinking I would offer you about 15 cents on your wedding ring, and that my heart would be proof against your words and tears. You have discovered your error. From this time on you will know the profession better and give it its just dues. We are not in the business for money, but for the sole purpose of assisting our unfortunate fellowbeings."

"But you will let me pray for you?" protested the grateful woman as she prepared to go.

"Well, yes, but don't exert yourself or let it interfere with your regular routine. Just send a few casts you to your carriage, and to hope to see you again. By the way, if you are short on diamonds come around and I'll lend you a bushel or so for a few weeks. Yours truly—au revoir."

Why He Winked.

The well-groomed, middle-aged man with the plug hat walked into a down-town drug store on Sunday afternoon last and winked at the soda clerk pointedly. The young pharmacist standing behind the toilet articles show case smiled wanly.

"Sorry," he said, "but it can't be done. They're mighty particular in this man's town about that sort of business, and—"

"But I—" the plug-hatted man started to say, still winking his left eye industriously.

"I know, maybe you do need it pretty bad and all that," said the cheerful young pharmacist, "but if I gave it to you and got nailed, why, we'd have to go out of business in a rush, and—"

"But isn't it queer that—"

"Yes, it's darned queer, sir, of course, but this is a pretty blue-lawish sort of a burg, you understand, and a man can't even get a shave here on Sunday, no matter whether he's got a hobo's growth of beard on his face or not. I'd like to sell you a good big hooter—s'pose you were out with the bunch last night and need a good eye-opener in your business—but I wouldn't

Clerk—Shall I try a pair of these ten-dollar bicycle boots on for you?
Lady—I think not. They come too high.

dare to take a chance and give it to you. The boss 'ud——"

The well-groomed man, still winking, blinking his left eye as if he were doing it for wages, cut in right there, with emphasis.

"Look here," said he, "are you wound up for twenty-four hours or what is the dickens ails you? There's a lump of gravel in my left eye and I came in here to see if I couldn't get some conversationalism clerk to blow or drown it out for me."

Then the abashed apothecary dug the rock out of the man's eye and forced himself to the conclusion that all winkers are not necessarily booze grafters.

Her Request.

"Listen, my darling."

The youthful millionaire drew to his heart the beautiful girl who had promised to share his wealth and happiness and in simple language began to recount what he future had in store for them.

"It has been my great wish," he said, "that you should have a home, not only commensurate with your position and my own, but one which will be a fit setting for your altogether sweet and delightful personality. And in the months now I have been engaged in a search after the best that money can buy, and the room I have had built especially for you is now complete throughout. Nothing has been omitted. Decorators and artists have bestowed their services, and the result is one that has seemed to provide our home with a suitable interior and with the most costly furnishings. What say you to this, my dear?"

It is lovely," replied his betrothed, as she heaved a slight sigh. "There is only one thing more, dearest, that I desire to make me completely and utterly happy."

"It shall be granted," exclaimed her enthusiastic lover. "Only tell me what it is."

The girl at his side stirred rapturously.

"One good ol' you," she said. "I was only going to say that when we have moved into our new house I would like the privilege of furnishing it all over again to suit myself."

A Literary Center.

Uncle Ephriam—Folks say that this is one of the most literary towns in the hull country.

Uncle William. Don't doubt it. There's a pile of writin' done here in Progeye. Take the Troop family, for instance. Betsy writ a poem for the paper they had the last day of school. Her mother, Mary Ann, writes the Progeye items for the Hustler down ter Banswood Corners; and old Tropp himself has writ three chthuzzies, ter my certain knowledge. Then there's Jed Larks. He's correspondent fer the Houndtown Hurrah. And only the other day I saw a testimonial on this here Doctor Gall's Liver Sand in the Gimlet that was nigh on ter a column long. And who do think writ it? It was Hiram Hooper. Who'd ever thought it? Yes, sir, it's the most literary town in the country. And say, I've got it from good authority that old Squire Peeler has writ 19 letters ter McKinley tellin' him how the Philippine question ought ter be settled. I'm proud of old Progeye. But don't it make you tired to hear Boston brag?

Romeo's Reason.

"Oh, Romeo, Romeo!"

Fair Juliet hung over the balcony in such a position that the calcium light man could not miss her without leaving the stage in total darkness.

"Wherefore art thou, Romeo?"

She paused for a reply.

"Because I am the only member of the troupe that can execute into these blamed tights," was the hoarse whisper of the lean gentleman who was playing Romeo.

Then he began a stiff-legged ascent of the rope ladder.

Ah, the many real tragedies that occur behind the glamor of the footlights.

Knew What She Liked.

The grocery man on the corner relates that a couple of days ago a little girl entered his emporium and timidly laying down a dime asked for ten cents' worth of candy.

"It's for papa," she said. "I want to s'prise him when he comes home."

The grocery man proceeded to dig out some of his stock, when the little girl interposed.

"Don't give me that kind. Give me caramels. I just love caramels."

"But I thought these were for papa," the grocery man remarked.

"I know," explained the little girl, "but when I give them to papa he'll just kiss me and say that 'cause I'm such a generous little girl he'll give them all back to me. So you'd better give me caramels."

Probably the easiest way to convince a man is to agree with him.

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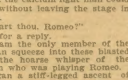

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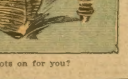

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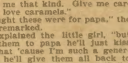

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A man knows lots of other men who dislike him, but what he doesn't know is why.

President McKinley's favorite game is chess. He is quite an expert player.

Civilized men worry a great deal, but there is no such word in the vocabulary of the savage.

The arms of perfection would soon be reached if people would follow the advice they give others.

A nation can better win success by noble deeds than by cruel destruction of human life for selfish ends.

Mr. Rockefeller might have saved himself a long explanation if he had just said truant exist to make money.

It occasionally happens that when a man loses his fortune in the same way he got it he wants to send the other fellow to jail.

As an evidence of the youth of this city it is only necessary to mention that the first white child born in Chicago is still alive.

Kerosene oil is costing 30 per cent more than it did a few weeks ago. But then, consumers are sure of getting a Standard article.

It is curious that with all the invention of weapons and armament nobody has thought of using the common gasoline stove in war.

A Chicago jury has established the principle that the privilege of making a coal hole open in a thickly populated sidewalk is worth $1,000.

With coal at $125 a ton in Alaska the man who discovers a mine of the "black diamonds" can laugh at the efforts of the gold miners to acquire wealth.

Admiral Dewey finds the shoals and quick-sands and hidden mines of Washington society far more annoying if not more dangerous, than any that he had to sail over in Manila.

Paris is in great luck to have a year of such widespread prosperity for her exposition, as it is probable more people will be able to make an extensive holiday trip this summer than ever before in the history of the world.

THE INKSTAND BATTLE.

BY E. W. FOSS.

We are making smokeless powder
And big bombs to throw a mile,
That will blow the foe to chowder
In the true dynamitic style.

We've a whirling gun; you start it,
And the myriad bullets fly,
And a hundred men a minute
Roll their stony eyes and die.

Let us stop thiswild death's revel;
Martin Luther has the style.
Threw his inkstand at the devil,
And the black fiend ducked and fled.

Smite your world-wrong; don't combat it
With a fusillade of lead;
Simply throw your inkstand at it;
Come connotrow, it is dead.

When the world upon the brink stands
Of some crisis steep and dread,
Like brave soldiers seize your inkstands,
Hurl them at the devil's head.

Pour your ink-pots in a torrent
Till the struggling demon sink,
Till the struggling fiend abhorrent
Drown in ocean of black ink.

For the men who're born a fighter,
For the brain that's learned to think,
There is danger and a terror
In a bottle of black ink.

Though it makes no weeping nations,
And leaves no gasping wars,
Placed 'neath error's strong foundations
It may blow them to the stars.

THE COWBOY'S SACRIFICE.

A Story of Two Mens' Love—A Mexican's Perfidy—Fighting in the Ruins of the Cliff Dwellers.

BY WILL T. WHITLOCK.

(Copyright, 1900.)

Begun in No. 12, March 31. Subscriptions can begin with that number, or back copies of the paper containing the story may be had of our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER VI.

Miguel gave a cry of rage and stepped quickly backward, drawing another he had looking into the muzzle of Jim Lang's revolver. He hesitated for a single moment and then his face broke into a malicious smile.

"You cowardly Mexican, you!" he said coolly. "But they will never leave this room alive." He leaped quickly back from the line of the expected report.

The bullet from Jim Lang's revolver sang through the comparatively small chamber, imbedding itself in the wall of the other room. Then Jim sprang through the door and ran to pursue the Mexican.

Waldere clinging Jim's shoulder with a vise-like grip. "He will kill you before you have ventured a foot into that room. We must get out of here by some other way.

"But there is no other door," said Jim looking about the walls. "This seems to be the last room in the cliff dwellings, and there must be a part of the mountain. We must both rush against it with an axe at once. He can't kill but one of us, and the other can escape." Jim's face passed with his eyes starting from their sockets. While he was speaking a slab of stone was seen to be slowly rising from over the only exit from the room. It settled into its place silently, but with a crash that cracked between itself and the jamb. The two men looked at each other in horror and then in amazement. They were shut in like rats in a trap. Jim sprang to the door and leaped at all their strength against the stone. They might as well have attempted to push the mountain from its bases.

"I knew it was only a dream—a nightmare," said Lang, trembling.

"The senors are brave men," came Miguel's taunting voice through the crack

"Oh, Jim. You've come back alive," cried Lena, tearfully.

"We were afraid we would never see you again," said Waldere in a husky voice.

The great cowboy blushed to the roots of his hair at Lena's words.

"Would you a cared—" he began passionately but checked himself and said with a firm set lip: "We've got to git out o' here somehow."

Then he related his adventures in the passageway.

When he had finished, Lena leaped to her feet. "I've thought it out," she cried. "We can escape yet."

"We can't get out through the tunnel," said Jim jokingly. "It didn't seem to lead to nowhere, and besides I wouldn't go back down there for—"

"No, no. I did not mean that way," cried Lena. "Listen to me, both of you. Didn't you hear that creaking sound when Miguel caused the boulder to fall across the outer door? He must have used some powerful contrivance to move that big rock and we must find the lever he used."

"I'll be gone! The door is open! Oh come quick! Let us escape before Miguel returns," cried Lena, her arms sank inelectedly.

"It must have been the Cliff Dwellers' method of closing the entrance to their homes against their enemies," said Waldere, thoughtfully as he emerged from the chest.

"I don't care whose method it was," said Jim impatiently. "Come on out of here. We can think of them things when we're safe outside."

They were moving eagerly across the outer room when again the Mexican's voice arrested them. He had returned to see him standing behind them.

"The cowboys are brave men," he said quietly, "and Miguel has lost. He could not kill you all and shot his last cartridge at a pheasant for la senorita's breakfast." He cast his empty revolvers upon the floor at their feet.

"You mighty right you've lost," cried Jim Lang and he could scarce keep his hands "We'll take ye back with us to guide us across the plains and then we'll see ye are to the boys. They'll make quick work of ye with a rope."

"Miguel loses la senorita, he loses all," said the Mexican. "He was a fool and should have yield to the inevitable instead of leaving her unmolested in hopes of teaching her to love him."

He sprang like a cat to the sill of one of the window openings and leaped over the edge of the cliff.

"Stay, hold," cried Waldere, divining his intentions, "we will forgive—"

"Miguel will not guide the senors back over the trail," he called. "Adios."

Both Lang and Waldere leaped forward but it was too late. An instant later a shot in the window was empty. They thrust their heads through the opening and beheld his body falling with a thud through the air, down, down, falling down through the cold mist and over the long descent. They drew back and covered their faces with their hands as though to shut out the awful sight.

There was a long silence. It was broken at last by Kirk Waldere.

"Lena, my child," he brokenly said, "you are two men who love you. Jim Lang there is one of the noblest men living. He has never loved aught except yourself. With him for a husband you will never want for love or protection and one not fit to be compared to him. I have lived recklessly and have trifled with the hearts of many women; but I love you too. You must now choose between us. We will abide manfully by your decision."

Lena looked and earnestly at Jim. She gave a hesitating step toward him, but turned and looked at Waldere's scarred features. A quick blush came over her face, and the next instant she had cast herself into his arms.

"It is you, Kirk," she whispered.

He drew her to his breast with a passionate clasp and rained down kisses upon her brow.

For a time they remained thus, lost to everything but themselves. Neither noticed that Jim Lang stood with white drawn face, staring with unseeing eyes from the cliff door.

At last he drew himself together with a jerk at his broad shoulders and said in a calm voice:

"We're a long ways from home and have got a mighty tough road to travel over to get there. We must start as soon as we can." And then he added huskily, "God bless you, Lenty. I know he'll make you happy and that's all Jim Lang cares for now. I believe I hear Flintfire a callin' and he should be, for a feller must be half starved. We'll be home in four days, God willin'."

CHAPTER VIII.

The sun was sinking in a blaze of red in the west when the three reached the foot of the Cliff Dwellers' stairway and stood on the edge of the great silent desert. Jim Lang had led the way downward in silence, his face unusually calm, but the iron limbs held in full control; Lena and Waldere followed him in equal silence, but their glances met and then they glanced into each other's eyes, were eloquent with tenderness.

Jim halted as he came in sight of the hungry horses and his neighing pleased mightily at the foot of the mountain.

"Lena, you must think you could begin the journey tonight?" he asked.

"Yes, why not? I came here alone with Miguel, and we traveled in the night. I was not afraid even then; much less would I be so now with two brave men as escorts."

"If only we could find the Mexican's horses," said Jim. "They have rested a few days and we could ride them and let our poor brutes follow. Waldere, you feed our ponies while I look about a little. Mebbe I kin find Miguel's mustanee."

Jim tramped sturdily away and was soon out of sight of the others. He had walked about half a mile when suddenly the big fellow halted and then cast himself at full length upon the ground.

"O Lord how can I go on livin' without her," he moaned, writhing in agony. "To know that she loves another, to know that even now she is in his arms; that day after day he will be with her, and that I must see them together—"

But after a time he arose with an impatient movement. "That ain't actin' very manly. You know, Jim Lang, that all you can do is to see her happy and your suffering ain't got nothing to do with it. Besides, this ain't findin' the greaser's ponies," he added. Jim was always a practical soul, and it was not long before he found the lazy transportation of the three across the divide.

Half an hour later he discovered the Mexican's ponies where he had hoped to find them, in one of the little parks grown plenteous that rose like huge stairsteps up the mountain side. He led the animals to where Lena and Waldere were seated. Lena had provided a meal from the stores found in the packs on the ponies, and the three sat down to break their fast before beginning the long journey homeward.

The moon was shining a silver crescent in the sky when Jim started, and he rode mounted in the intrepid Flintfire, who seemed to understand the pride in Jim's voice as beautiful mistress' voice and caresses. Jim's and Waldere rode the two horses, and the other animals followed in their wake. Through the long cool night they rode. Lang found himself more than content that he might not see the stolen caresses of the two who rode behind him, and he bold under the cowboy's seeming blindness, finally pulled his pony beside that of Lena, and reaching over, he drew her to his breast. With her head resting on his shoulder, the tender kiss was given by the swift morning.

Jim had wisely allowed the Mexican pony to pursue its own gait and on the fourth days of the sun lighted up the desert, he was pleased surprised to find himself in near some huge bowlders that rose up suddenly from the level sand. He cried out:

"Hurrah!" he cried in a voice that startled the two lovers apart. "This little beast has brought me right to the spot. We can rest, today in the shade of these rocks, and the next morning we will reach the cliffs."

All through the long blistering day they remained at the spot, sleeping and resting. When evening came they filled the water bottles and started out singing, the horses once again upon their journey. For two nights more they traveled thus, the hearts of the lovers growing more and more lighter as they drew nearer and nearer home; while the spirits of Jim Lang rose in his case to scribe the feelings of the poor cowboy. He reviled himself against his fate, but by dint of his strength of will can, and made no sign.

But on the fourth day of their journey, while they were resting beside one of the little streams, Lena fell to the sandy ground and then after flowing a short distance, disappeared from sight. Kirk started suddenly awoke from sleep and looked wildly about him, but saw nothing.

"Kirk, dear, what is it?" cried Lena, who had been fondly watching her lover while he slumbered.

"My head is bursting," he moaned, throwing himself upon the ground.

In a fright Lena threw her arms about him and cried piteously. But the big cowboy looked intently at Kirk, whose deathly white face and features told of something something something frightful.

"My God, I was afraid of it," muttered the cowboy. "Kirk, old pard, speak to me." He wasn't born on the plains like me and you, and this journey must be much for one like him. But don't you get scared, now. Mebbe he'll be struck blind, but he'll see you in heaven, we are where we can get plenty of good cold water, and we'll have it out in a few days and then on from the springs."

They hastily brought water from the spring and bathed Waldere's head, but their tender ministering was of no avail. Kirk soon became unconscious and lay in a state like one possessed. It took all the iron strength of Jim Lang to keep Lena from the stream as his running away across the sands proved that his mind was gone. No one who saw the man overcome by the awful heat of the desert, can imagine the frightful violence of the delirium one. Jim, with the assistance of Lena, succeeded in overcoming the violence with the scene, repressed her tears and soothed her with all the skill at his command in such circumstances.

For an hour Kirk raved in Jim's clasp. Then suddenly he grew quiet. The unfortunate cowboy died out of his fine eyes and a look of bliss came over his face.

"Lena," said Kirk, with a wan smile, "I know I'm dying, but I'm glad I'm dying. I knew it couldn't last. Such happiness was [illegible] for me. [illegible] you, dear, if only [illegible] Jim, you speak [illegible] cried Lena, with [illegible] now. We [illegible] few days until you recover. Think, dear, of the happy days in store for us when you get home."

He pressed his lips against her face. "It is no use dearest. I felt it coming yesterday, and while you slept, I prayed to my father to father telling him of you and how I won you. He will love you, I know, and when I have shown him that I died manfully—" his voice grew husky and faint.

"Oh, Kirk, dear, you can't—you mustn't—you must be a few short days—come back—oh, my beloved, I will not leave you back—oh, my beloved," and threw herself across his in her anguish and threw herself across his body in a burst of heartrending sobs. Jim Lang managed to calm her in some about her, and the two lay clasped in a close embrace.

There was silence for a long time. At last Jim Lang, with a choking sob in his throat, stooped to separate them. He heard started back as he touched Waldere's hand and with a cold shiver of fear, with a mighty effort he raised Lena Long from her dead lover's embrace. She seemed unconscious of his presence

"Leny, Leny, he cried. But Lena had fainted.

CHAPTER IX.

When Lena regained consciousness, Jim Lang spoke tenderly: "God knows how my heart aches for you, Leny. But now we must bear up like men and women do. Your lover must be buried before this horrible heat changes his good looking face. You must prepare him for the grave, Leny. I will go and dig the grave. Be brave, my girl, for the brave know I'd help ye if I could; but this is only one of the ways of Providence that we poor mortals can't understand."

He brushed the tears from his face and left her alone with her dead.

An hour later they placed beside the shallow grave and covered it in the sand. In it they placed all that was mortal of poor Kirk Waldere. The handsome face was smiling still as when he had last clasped Lena in his arms. For a moment they stood looking at him in mournful silence. Then Jim began to pile stones on the body with hand while Lena knelt with clasped hands beside the grave. When the grave was covered Jim Lang rolled two great boulders upon it—the tombstone of the dead man.

Then the three of them resumed their journey. Need I tell of the long, weary days and nights that followed? How Lena rode along indifferent to everything? How she would stop, when Jim Lang would dismount and dig, pitiful eyes across the desert to the lonely grave in the sand until Jim would turn back, and lead her pony again toward home? Or of the thoughts that filled the hearts of our humble hero?

At last they arrived at the ranch and with a great sigh of relief, Jim saw Lena clasped in the arms of her distracted parents, and knew that at last, after days of toil, he as a mother can give to a sorrowing daughter.

But he was not turning away toward the corrals, Lena released herself from her father's arms and Jim advanced toward the cowboy.

"Leny," was all she said, as she placed her little hand in his great brown one; but it broke the tension of her dry-eyed grief and she burst into a great soul-relieving sobs.

Jim Lang rode away with a feeling of thanksgiving in his honest heart.

A year had passed. Jim Lang had left the ranch and had wandered across the country listlessly. He had worked on a ranch in Arizona, he had herded sheep in Colorado, at last he had traveled to Old Mexico with a herd of horses. He told himself that he had ceased to love Lena and it mattered little what became of him. But in his heart of hearts he still hoped to return to the old ranch.

One morning he was at his protesting employer's ranch and mounted his mustang. Jim always declares that his horse struck a premonition that he never wouldn't be turned aside; but he knows better. He simply could not stay away no longer.

As he came within sight of the old surroundings, his pony broke with tears, and his heart beat with alarming rapidity. Half a mile from the ranch house he dismounted, he was overcome with a sudden timidity. Would he find—— As he stood there in the road, he was startled by a clear, rich voice:

"Jim, Jim, is it you?"

He turned quickly and beheld Lena mounted on her pony coming toward him. He could only stand in dumb ecstacy.

"Where have you been, Jim?" asked Lena, coming to his side and putting forth her hand. "Why did you go away? I have longed for you."

"You know why I went away, Leny. I loved you too well."

Lena leaped lightly to the ground, and came close to his side. "And did not love me after lovin' him," he blundered.

"That love was too great for this world," she said, sadly."

"Oh, Lena, do you mean that you could learn to care a little for me now?"

"Yes, Jim," she answered, simply.

Jim Lang's heart was too great for words. He could only fold her closely to his breast in silence.

(The end)

How Hot She Was.

It was one of the first warm days and little Mabel, aged 4, who had been playing with some neighboring children, rushed into the house, and, throwing herself across her mother's lap, exclaimed:

"Oh, mamma, take off some of my clothes. I'm a whole petticoat too hot."

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AN OCEAN MYSTERY.

The Adventures of Three Boys Who Were Cast Away on a Desolate Island in the Polar Sea.

By ALFRED E. TOZER.

(Copyrighted 1900.)

CHAPTER I.

OFF FOR THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

There was a sharp cry of alarm, followed by the gathering of an excited crowd around a fashionably dressed lady who was standing at the open door of her coach, near the massive Federal building, in the city of Boston.

Presently a burly, rugged-faced policeman, baton in hand, pushed his way roughly through the crowd and cleared a little space about the frightened lady.

"What is the matter here?" he demanded, still pressing the people back, and with no gentle hand.

"I have been robbed," was the reply. "Robbed of a very costly diamond pin. I had it but a moment ago, then two boys brushed rudely against me, and now it is gone."

"Do you see the boys here now?" demanded the officer.

The lady's eyes traveled slowly over the circle of faces around her, then one neatly-gloved hand directed the officer's attention to two boys who were standing but a few feet away.

"There they are," she said.

The officer stepped up to the boys and drew a pair of handcuffs from his pocket.

"The game is up, boys. Put out your hands!"

The boys, evidently under the age of eighteen, turned pale at the disgraceful steel touched their wrists, but they did not attempt to escape. They were poorly dressed, and their faces were thin and wan, but they looked the lady in the face with honest, unflinching eyes.

"You are mistaken, lady," one of them said. "We arrived here after the crowd gathered."

"Enough of that," interposed the officer. "You can't have your trial here in the street. Step this way, while I ring for the wagon."

Tears of shame and indignation gathered in the eyes of the boys, but they moved forward as directed. As the officer turned away, however, a hand was laid upon his arm and a middle-aged gentleman who conveyed in his manner and dress unmistakable evidences of prosperity, looked him steadily in the eyes.

"You have made a mistake, Mr. Officer," the gentleman said.

"Tell that to the judge," replied the policeman, with a sneer. "I guess I understand my business, sir."

The faces of the two boyish prisoners brightened, and a ray of hope shone in their eyes. The disgrace of standing there, handcuffed together in the public gaze, was hard enough to bear, but the thought of a dreary prison, the law's delay, a hasty trial without one friend or face in sight, with no one to speak a word in their behalf—it was indeed a terrible outlook for them, and they turned toward the gentleman with pleading looks.

"Oh, sir," said one of the boys, "did you see us take it there before this happened? If you did, do not desert us, for we have no friend in all the world."

"I see it all," said the gentleman, kindly, "and will not desert you. Mr. Officer," he added, turning to the policeman, "if you will release these boys I will become responsible for their appearance at court at any time."

"You may be a pal of the kids for all I know," growled the policeman. "Stand aside! Here comes the wagon."

The next moment, amid a clang of bells and a rush of the crowd, the police wagon drew up at the curb. The prisoners were hustled in most unceremoniously, and the gentleman stepped back. The officer cast an ugly look in his direction, purposely pushed him aside, and pursued his beat. But his triumph was short lived. Before he was ten feet away from the scene of his exploit, a ragged newsboy in the crowd, glad of an opportunity of making an officer feel uncomfortable, shouted:

"Hey, cop, dat man won't do a ting to you. Dat's Mr. Melville, de great banker an' ship owner."

The policeman knew that that name was a name of magic in the city, and with a face burning with servility and vexation, he turned hastily toward the gentleman whom he had so recently accused of being a pal of two thieves, or two supposed thieves, rather. Mr. Melville, however, was at that moment stepping into a carriage, and paid no attention to the advances of the crestfallen officer. The crowd heard him direct his driver to hasten to police headquarters, and he was gone, leaving the policeman standing on the curb vainly trying to gain speech with him.

"Hey, cop, you'd better be lookin' up another job," shouted the newsboy, and the crowd laughed and made merry. But they did not in the least comfort the policeman.

Mr. Melville's carriage reached the station just as the patrol wagon containing the two handcuffed boys drove up. He was well known to the officer in charge there at the time, and had only to state that he had observed the boys many yards away from the scene of the robbery at the time of its occurrence to cause their immediate release.

As for the patrolman and his impudence," he added, "I shall attend to that matter later. Come," he continued, turning to the boys he had so unselfishly and recklessly thrown his fortune into my carriage. I want to talk with you."

The boys complied, bashfully enough, for they could not help comparing their own shabby attire with the magnificence of the rig into which they were invited.

"You seem to be honest, straightforward boys," observed the banker, as they rode along. "How comes it, then, that you are here in Boston without a friend in the world? These are strange times for boys."

The boys told their story in a few words. They were Charley Marion, Robert Marion, and Charley Graves, of about the same age, though perhaps half a year separating Robert's father had died two years before, leaving him quite a fortune, when, however, had been scattered to the winds by a speculator and guardian. Charley's parents had both been dead for many years, and he had lived with an uncle in New England until a short time ago, when the old city they had left behind him with a sneer. The boys had met at a preparatory school about a year ago, and had been close friends ever since, though Robert was the senior and Charley's pupil and Charley was boy of all work. The loss of his patrimony to their guardian left in the world, and Charley had abandoned his profitless situation and accompanied him in his wanderings. After a good deal more about, they had reached Boston, entirely penniless. Since coming to the city they had looked in vain for work, and had barely existed on such odd jobs as came in their way.

Mr. Melville listened intently to the modest recital, and, noting the marks of the said evident intelligence of the two boys as the story progressed.

"How would you like to go to sea?" he finally asked.

Excitement instantly showed itself in both eager faces.

"Of all things I should like that best," said Robert.

"Yes, and Charley, "I should like that."

"Well," said the banker, "I am interested in a whaling voyage that will be made for the coast of Greenland. I have a nephew, a slim, sickly young fellow of about your age, who should make the voyage with the hope of recovering his health. If you like, you may go with him. Charley can be both companions. Of course you will be under the employ of the ship, and have to perform some labor to perform, but you will have a berth in the cabin and not a comparatively easy time. What do you say?"

What could the boys say, except that they were thankful for the offer, and the opportunity and would be ready at any moment? And so the matter was settled, much to their discussion. Then Mr. Melville explained that he had known Robert's father well, and had had many business dealings with him.

"And I always found him honest and true," he added, "and if his son is at all like him, he shall never want for a friend."

That night the boys slept in the cabin of the banker's mansion. The nephew of Mr. Melville, the nephew mentioned by the banker, was introduced to them. Thomas Hall, and pale, he was a stout-hearted boy, with steadfast blue eyes, and the three youngsters became great friends at once. In a week's time the Marion was ready for the voyage, and the three were cast off. And so, with gratitude in their hearts and animated by bright hopes for the future, the two boys began a new life under the most favorable auspices. Our two waifs were in love with the sea, for both, though young, were traces of Saxon blood in their composition, being flaxen of hair, blue of eye, and sturdy of spirit and limb. Of such stuff were the old rulers of the ocean composed. The three boys had a neat little cabin all to themselves, and for a time they were perfectly happy, notwithstanding a slight seasickness.

Days and weeks of suffering were before them; still, if they could have known then all that was to befall them in the dreary north, among the ice and the mysterious currents of the unknown sea; if they could have looked into the future and beheld all that was to be endured, it is doubtful if they would have turned back.

They were all brave in spirit, and of unusual strength of character, and in the chill of many a polar night in the silent watches, when the cold of the strongest heart, where men turn mad from solitude and the longing for home, in the long, silent stretches where man is not and where only the wind is heard in the purple surf, they were to be tested and tried.

CHAPTER II.

IN AN ICE POCKET.

"The ice-blink!"

"Look at the fourth!"

The whaler Marion, a screw-steamer of 400 tons burden, was in the Arctic ocean, off the eastern coast of Greenland, though her exact location no one save the captain, Mr. Stebbins, seemed to know. The three boys had enjoyed the outward trip as only can two youngsters are capable of enjoying an ocean voyage. During the long evenings spent in their little cabin they had become familiar with the whims and lore of the north, and at first all had agreed that it was likely that the captain would be ready to return home with a cargo of oil and whalebone long before they had had enough of the north.

"But now we won't catch a whale in a month," Charley said, one night after the Marion had passed Cape Farrell, at the southern extremity of Greenland. "It seems to me now that I'd like to stay here forever. And then the stories of whaling voyages would make things a trifle more interesting, wouldn't they, in time, I suppose?"

"Yes, they'll come in time," said Robert, little knowing how soon that time was to come.

"I think," said Will Melville, "that we've passed plenty of whales already. I've been counting them, and Captain Stebbins doesn't go about the business he was sent for. I tell you, Tom, Bob, Charley like the looks of things."

"Why, what's up?" asked Charley.

"Well," was the reply, "for one thing, the captain isn't trying to capture any whales that we've seen, and, for another thing, I know from what I heard the sailors saying, one night when they didn't know I was listening, that the ship is hundreds of miles out of her course."

"Out of her course?" repeated both boys in a breath.

"Yes," was the reply, "for uncle's instructions were to sail up Davis strait into Baffin's bay instead of turning west at Cape Farrell, the captain turned east. The sailors said that was the reason for not finding they said we had passed through Denmark strait, between Iceland and Greenland, and were then in the vicinity of Jan Mayen land. Is that enough to be the north pole."

"Where is Jan Mayen island?" asked Charley, always on the lookout for information.

"It's about latitude 71," was the reply, "or within twelve degrees of the most northerly point reached by explorers."

Charley gave a low whistle of amazement.

"We'll be Arctic explorers after a while," he said.

"We're pretty near that now," said Will. "Have you noticed the ice drifting south? The days are getting short, for one thing, and the bears are about due. I like the idea of being here all right enough, but I'd like to know what idea Captain Stebbins has in his head."

"Whatever his idea is," said Robert, "the sailors are in with it. Haven't you noticed how they talk and whisper together, and how they pause and try to look innocent when any one of us approaches them? I fully agree with Will that something unfavorable is in the wind."

The captain spends every minute of his time on deck or in the cabin poring over charts," said Charley, "and once I heard him say to the first mate that we ought to sight the island before very long. Now, what did he mean by that?"

"Perhaps they are seeking another treasure island," said Will. "I hope they will find it if they are, but I hope they will play square with uncle."

"If they meant to do that," said Robert, "they'd have been after some of the whales we've seen."

For days after this conversation the vessel sailed amid scenes strange and unfa-

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miliar, not only to the boys, but to most of the members of the crew. As they penetrated farther into the regions of ice the temperature lowered rapidly, fogs arose in the distance, and heavy storms of snow alternated with sunshine and cloudless skies. Then, away to the north, were observed the ice-blinks, a shining band of light in the horizon, always a faithful monitor of solid ice, of the radiating power of which it is a portrayal. This was some days after the time of the conversation just recorded.

Icebergs were now numerous. Now bathed in golden splendor and flashing like diamonds, now enveloped in fog as dense as the streets of London ever knew, they drifted on to the south. It was the latter part of the Arctic summer, and water dashed down the sides of the icebergs in torrents, wearing them away and cutting them apart until the huge fragments ground into each other like giants intent only on destruction. Now and then a polar bear could be seen standing on some lofty peak, with sea gulls darting about his lair. The cold was not yet unbearable.

On the morning when the "blinks" were first discovered the captain appeared to be in a particularly ugly frame of mind. Whatever his intention was, he seemed to see the culmination of his wishes fading from him as the vessel proceeded northward. Now that solid ice seemed close at hand—which was rare at that season of the year in that latitude—he appeared to be in a despairing mood. He raved about the deck like an insane person, blustering and cursing, until no member of the crew dare approach him. It was in this mental condition that Will Melville found him when he appeared on deck about noon. The boy approached him

"Shoot, Robert, for the love of God, shoot!"

with some light remark regarding the exhibition in the north, and was met with a frown and a violent push.

Starting back in astonishment and dismay, the boy caught his foot on a coil of rope and fell heavily to the deck. Several sailors came running to his assistance, and Will tried in vain to arise to his feet with their assistance. All to no purpose. The effort caused him such intense pain that he sank back upon the deck with a groan. Robert and Charley were soon at his side and the ship's surgeon was summoned.

That dignitary made a rough examination, shook his head, and declared that the boy's leg was broken. Although coarse and rough in manner, the fellow was still an excellent surgeon, and, ordering the sufferer carried into the cabin, he reduced the fracture and bound the broken leg hard and fast between two straight strips of narrow planking, besides putting on the usual splints.

"We may have a tough time of it," he explained to Robert, "and I mean to fix the lad up so that no amount of knocking about can disarrange what I have done. See that the ropes on the lower ends of the planks are kept tight. Such an arrangement is unusual, but I am not going to be trimped through life through any fault of mine."

Robert attended to all that was asked and the remainder of the day was spent in the cabin with the injured boy.

"I'd like to shoot that captain," Robert said, in a whisper to Will, "and I believe I'll do it, too, if anything serious comes of this hurt. That was a brutal act of his, and I'll be even with him."

On the morning following the incident, the Marion seemed to be in a perfect nest of gigantic icebergs, and straight ahead, a field of floating ice stretched away as far as the eye could reach. Leaving Charley in the cabin with Will, Robert started to go on deck. Half way there, his keen ears caught a cry of alarm and he hastened forward. The explanation of the cry he had heard was not hard to discover. The ship was pressed on either side by icebergs. The one to the east, a veritable floating mountain, lifted its higher peaks in a slanting direction until they overhung the deck of the vessel. The one to the west was somewhat concave in form, and almost entirely enclosed the ship on the three sides untouched by its fellows. The full light of day could be seen only through a narrow opening at the prow and the stern. The channel in front was packed with drift ice, while the one aft was tolerably open. As the boy sprang forward the grating of the bergs could be heard on the hull, and in a moment the ship lifted slightly, showing that the ice was crowded under the keel, probably touching there. But he understood that the grinding below would soon wear away the points of contact, and that then the vessel would be crushed like an eggshell.

Robert could see that the ice-drift to the north, while parting at the upward surface of the two icebergs, as on a blunt wedge-point, was still hugging closely to the sides of the two frozen monsters, hugging and pressing them closer to the doomed ship.

For a moment his heart failed him, but not for his own safety was he concerned. What chance would the wounded boy have for life in the open boats to which they must all soon flee?

CHAPTER III.

A RIFLE SHOT AND ITS RESULTS.

"To the boats! Man the boats!"

The captain issued the order with many oaths, and the men obeyed swiftly and with all the energy in their possession. It was a desperate situation. It seemed as if the ship could not last five minutes, yet what

shouted back. "But, remember, that I gave you a chance for your life."

By means of much shoving, the three boats which had been launched were finally urged out of the ice pocket, and in a moment disappeared from view, leaving the three boys alone on the doomed ship.

For a moment the three boys who had apparently abandoned their last chance of life in order that they might remain with their disabled companion, almost instant death seemed inevitable. The pressure of the ice constantly increased until the deck of the vessel bulged up like the top of the letter "A," and it was with difficulty that the boys maintained their footing. But, as if this danger was not sufficient to terrorize the stoutest heart, a new complication soon presented itself.

From the smaller icebergs to the west there came a succession of low growls, and the next moment the boys found themselves confronted by two polar bears of monstrous size. They were on a level with the shelf of ice facing the ship. They had evidently been disturbed in their dinner by the floating and footless prizes, and were in the last stages of ferocious hunger. They were lean and gaunt, and their little eyes burned red with a savage thirst for blood as they made ready for a spring to the deck of the ship, which was within easy reach. For an instant the boys stood as if turned to stone by the danger attendant on the on-pressing icebergs, the sudden and new peril. A new grave in the ocean seemed desirable as compared with the horrible death, the terrible mangling by both teeth and claw, which now seemed to be imminent.

"The rifle, Robert! The rifle, Charley! 'Tis there by the hatchway! Shoot, Robert, for the love of God, shoot!"

The elder boy sprang for the weapon, took careful aim at the foremost animal, and fired. The result was a deafening crash, a long, heavy roar as of exploding and falling worlds. This was followed by a surge of water which deluged the slanting deck of the vessel. Then the view to the west, where the iceberg had obtruded its bulk, was clear of ice floating and huge masses and fragments of the icy mountain.

It is well known that at times the mere vibration of the human voice will set in motion a glacier or a field of snow or ice. In moving about the glaciers of Switzerland, travelers are invariably warned against speaking above a whisper. More than once an unlucky shout has brought death, swift and terrible, to a party of explorers.

In this case, the clear reverberations of the rifle shot, acting upon the still atmosphere and placing it in quick motion, produced the remarkable result stated. The iceberg had doubtless floated long under the melting rays of the sun, and the shot not been fired, must soon have fallen to pieces, though less suddenly. The eastern iceberg, too, had felt the effects of the vibrations of the shot produced by the shot. Its loftier pinnacles had fallen into the sea with a crash, but so far had those stately towers extended over the deck of the vessel that the huge fragments thus dislodged nearly all cleared the place where the boys were standing, though a few struck the after part of the ship, with a result to be shown later on.

For a moment the two boys, thus wonderfully delivered from death in one of its most awful forms, stood breathless and dumb. Then from the south came the hundred cries for help, and they saw that the crews of the two icebergs had wrecked the boats in which the sailors had recently embarked. The scream of the men engaged in getting far away, and every boat had been crushed by the falling masses. Many of the men had been killed instantly, while others were seriously injured. In all not more than half a dozen seamen were now to be seen swimming in the water. Among these was the captain, who had so basely deserted the boys, leaving them to what he believed to be certain death. His appeals for succor were piteous in the extreme, but nothing could be done to rescue him, and he soon sank from sight. One by one the men disappeared beneath the floating ice, each struggling with other down in their frantic efforts at self-preservation, until not one was left alive.

Turning their eyes from this scene of death and just retribution, the boys perceived the two animals whose appearance had brought about such remarkable results, floundering, uninjured by the shot, in the water. Again and again they endeavored to gain the surface of the huge blocks of ice floating about, but, failing in this, they turned their backs to the vessel and swam

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straight away to the west. Following with their eyes the progress made by the hens, the boys saw that they were headed for a small and rocky island which rose from the bosom of the ocean some distance away.

"Land! Land!" shouted Charley. "We are saved!"

But his exclamation of joy was soon checked by a shout from his companion.

"The vessel is sinking!" cried Robert. "Sinking fast, and Will is still in the cabin!"

His words were true enough, for Mr. Marion had been seriously wrenched by the pressure of the waves and water was now pouring into her hold through many open seams.

"She will not float ten minutes at this rate," added Robert, "and we must bring Will to the deck at once, if he has not already been drowned in his bed."

"And then for the island," said Charley. "I will look to the remaining boats while you assist Will. Can you carry him up alone?"

"Yes," was the quick reply, "look to the boats."

Robert turned in the direction of the cabin while Charley hastened off. In a moment a cry of alarm escaped the latter's lips.

Every boat not taken by the sailors had been crushed by the falling ice.

The situation was again more than critical. Death seemed certain.

While the boy stood contemplating with dismay the ruined boats a call came from the cabin.

"Quick, Charley," he heard Robert shout. "Come at once!"

Charley glanced at the barren island, certainly two miles away, and hastened forward.

"It is useless," he thought, "the boat will sink before we can rig a raft."

The another imperative call came from the cabin. As the boy continued his precarious progress on the deck, bulging out in the center at an angle of at least forty-five degrees; as before described, he felt the vessel settling under his feet, settling steadily until it suddenly shivered as from a blow and remained stationary.

He tried to call out, to warn his companions, but before he could form the words on his lips he slipped and fell. The next moment he found himself struggling among the floating ice in the Arctic ocean.

Further chapters of this highly interesting Arctic story will be found in next week's Ledger. See our premium offers on pages thirteen and fifteen.

True Prediction.

1. Timothy Clambake—This 'ere corn, Jerushy, oil be up before you know it."

2. And it was.

Kaiser as a Boy.

The present German emperor, then a small boy, attended the wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales. He was under the charge of his two uncles, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duke of Connaught. As may be expected, young William fidgeted madly, and consequently received occasional warning tap on the shoulder. But how he did revenge himself. His uncles were in Highland dress, and the future emperor stuffy knelt down and bit into their bare legs with great earnestness.

Read the advertisement on page 10 entitled astonishing offer.

Ants Made a Bridge.

A naturalist found that some black ants were devouring the skins of some bird specimens on a table, so he made tar circles on four pieces of paper, and put one under each leg of the table. Ants will not cross tar. Pretty soon he found the ants busily at work again and looking at the tar circles found each one was bridged by bits of sand which the clever ants had brought in from the street.

CHANGED.

BY MILDRED B. M'FADEN.

There was a time when every word
Of yours my being thrilled and stirred;
When e'er Life's hidden paths untried
I would have journeyed by your side
Willingly—I would have!

You did not know; we parted thus,
In ways diverse. Fate guided us;
Time passed by, as time could,
But now 'tis all in vain you say
Heading—"I love you so."

Which one has changed most, you or I?
As Time, light-winged, has sped by,
Hath miracle been wrought in each?
Or pride or weakness made us reach?
Verily, Love's way is strange!

I do not know; I only see
The distance 'twixt you and me;
Your pathway winds thro' valleys bright,
Mine climbs the following mountain height;
Ceaselessly, I struggle on.

And yet I own it would be blest,
If I might stay with you and rest;
Might still Ambition's voice for aye,
If only with you I could stay.
Truthfully: "I love you so."

HER DREAM.

"I'm going to the corner for a cigar. I shan't be gone long, dear," he said, as he put on his coat.

"Don't hurry on my account," was the ungracious response, and Mrs. Templeton flung herself into a chair and gazed into the fire until she heard the bang of the street door. Then:

"So commonplace. So hopelessly commonplace," she cried. "I'd a mind to beat me once in a while. Anything to make life interesting. Such dreary waste of daily insanity—this barren, empty round. Sick of it!" and she pounded a sofa cushion viciously, as though it were her head.

Then, resting both feet on the fender, she stared up at the mantelpiece where her husband might have been—the hero of her life, the master, guide, lover, friend, in one gracious whole.

Instead, what was he? Kind, good, attentive enough. But after all a prop, a provider—a vis-a-vis in the chimney corner, a walking-stick.

She was roused from unquiet brooding by the sudden entrance of a tall, cloaked figure, man or woman she could not tell. Silently it beckoned, and as silently, impelled by a power she did not understand, the young wife rose. Out into the night, to a part of the city entirely unfamiliar, she followed. A stinging snow blew in their faces with the reckless impartiality with which it beat upon the thinly clad shoulders and frost-bitten fingers of a tiny woman who left the car at one of the many crowded thoroughfares of the west side.

Mrs. Templeton and the strange guide followed her past grimy houses until she turned into a narrow entry running the rear of the district ones in the squalid row. An unhealthy dampness seemed everywhere, and the air was colder here and foul. Away back in a labyrinth of alleys leading to a black and frowning sky the shivering little woman climbed, and Mrs. Templeton, obeying the mysterious figure, followed—apscosty, icy steps that creaked with a surprised whine at the touch of such daintly feet.

Their unconscious guide paused at a door on the top landing, blew on her stiff fingers, then turned the knob and entered, still followed by the others in silence, Mrs. Templeton in affright—in the sense that she and her companion were ghosts—while the two rooms were meagerly furnished, with a pitiful attempt at neatness. A breath of better days lingered about the place, in the ribboned work basket, one or two rugs and an easy chair. In this sat a haggard man, old before his time, the weak, handsome face marked with dissipation and ill health. One arm supported his head, the other sleeve was empty. To the new comers he gave no greeting only coughed hoarsely.

Bending down to him the little woman said fondly: "Did you miss me, dear? Has the day seemed long?"

"Everlasting. Don't touch me. Your hands are cold. Hurry and get me my tea and eat. I've been neglected all day," he added, querulously.

"I'm sorry, dear, but since your accident you know I've had to—"

"Oh, yes," he interrupted, harshly, "I know what you're going to say. Remind me of my drunken fall and my bad conduct and how you have to support me—go on, I'm used to it."

Unheeding, she went on pleasantly: "The fire is nearly out. No wonder you're cold." And in the little kettle red with rust, she coaxed an unwilling flame.

"Such luck today, Sam. I'm enlarged to sew all next week at 75 cents a day. Plain sewing, of course, until I get into practice and command better prices."

"Yes, and then you will leave the good-for-nothing husband whose cursed luck brought you to this. All women are alike." She did not resent bitterness in the ill-humor continued and grew with each word.

"Well. How long will it be through that broken pane. I guess that is where love flew out when poverty came in at the door."

The visitors stayed to hear no more. Down the slippery stairs they went, but at the bottom Mrs. Templeton turned to the shadow, as the door a few steps below them was violently opened.

A man's bloated, bestial face and burly shoulders forced themselves into the opening. He half dragged, half carried an unconscious woman. With an oath, he thrust her out, and shut the door. The cold and dark she lay in an inert heap, the snow sprinkling her hair like coarse diamonds it would ever wear, and covering her bruised shoulder with a powder as white as my lady's own. Still, like ghosts the two watchers glided away—back where the air was warm—where wine and death, if abroad, were cloaked at least.

It was very late, and the aristocratic avenue into which they turned was given over to a riot of snow, through which stately lamps converged in a glittering triangle. Up the steps of a stone mansion they went; the door opening for them as if by magic.

On a davenport in the drawing room a woman half inclined, her breast under its covering of lace and jewels heaving with sobs.

At their entrance she rose and thrust toward them a letter crumpled and wet with tears. "See!" she cried, "the last proof," then, in her frenzy she muttered: "I have feared it for months, feared that she, this other woman, had all—all I crave. Nothing of his wealth is mine, but this—" And she glanced contemptuously about the magnificent apartment, and at her own sumptuous attire. "None of all the wealth of his heart, his soul. It is all hers. I have only his name." She burst into a passion of hopeless sobbing. And they glided out with her words ringing in their ears: "Oh, give me back his love! Take his name, wealth, everything, but let me keep his love."

Mrs. Templeton begged her guide. "Home, oh, take me home," but "One more," the voice whispered, and led the way to another stately palace. The windows were dark, only one faint light glowed in a room above. At the entrance she started and almost shrieked aloud, as a knot of something soft and black, which hung from the door, was blown by the wind against her cheek. Silently they proceeded above to where the one light flickered. They entered the room, it was very cold and almost empty, save for a long sheeted thing in the center. By it knelt another figure, who, not heeding the presence of the living, called ruinously upon the dead, and threw her arms about the silent clay, and tried to warm it. "So cold, so cold," she moaned and Mrs. Templeton awoke.

The fire was low, and she shivered; then, rousing herself with a hysterical laugh, she poked the embers vigorously, then started violently at a sudden sound. It was only the slamming of the front door. She sprang to meet her husband.

"Oh, I'm so glad you have come." And she hid her face on his shoulder and held him close. He stroked her hair gently. "I'm afraid I was gone too long, dear, See, you have let the fire go out."

New Catch Game.

Here is a new game of "catch" the boys will enjoy. It is called "Stage and Hounds," and in playing it one boy is at first the hound, and he must try to touch the other players. When he has touched one, the two hounds join hands and try to catch another. When they have caught, the three join hands and try after others, until all except one have been caught and joined hands. Then the one that has not been caught has to be the first hound for the next time.

Generous Boy King.

The young king of Spain always insists on having his pockets filled with coppers before going for a drive and scatters the coins among the many beggars who crowd round his carriage.

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In order that the wonderful restorative power in the hands of every person who suffers the mental and physical weaknesses of middle age, The Von Mohl Co. has decided to send a free trial package, sealed from all observation. The remedy is sent by mail in a plain package and without any printing on the outside or anything to indicate what is inside. Accompanying the medicine there is sent a plain, sealed envelope containing a receipt for the medicine privately written out so any druggist can fill it at small cost.

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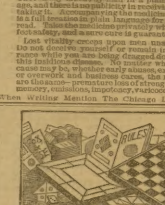

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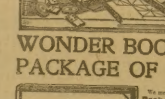

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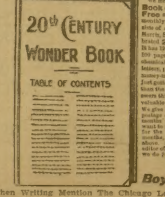

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Hen Wanted Them.

A cat and five kittens were found one morning comfortably ensconced in the hay loft of a stable at Bockenhurst. They were not wanted there, and so the stable man moved the family to a crib in a stall, where a broody but persistent hen had been for many days sitting upon some china eggs. Before long sounds of a struggle were heard, and the cat left her little ones with a good deal of haste.

On investigating, the stableman found to his astonishment that the hen had driven out the cat and taken her place as foster mother to the kittens; nor would she permit the cat to return. She cooed to the kittens and did her best to amuse them; when they became restless she exercised maternal authority in keeping them well within bounds. Sometimes, while attending to one side of her nest, a kitten would stray from the others. But the foster mother was not to be evaded. She would at once leave her place and search till she found the truant, and persuaded it by pushing and other means to return to the nest.

Of course if was necessary that the cat should be allowed to approach her offspring from time to time in order to feed them. The hen had then to be forcibly removed and the door barred against her. No sooner was it opened than the hen would drive the cat out and resume her place as head of the household. At night she spread her wings over the little animals just as though they were chickens, and certainly they seemed to like the cosy warmth of their feathered quilt.

Physical Culture Girl.

A strong argument in favor of physical culture among girls is advanced by the students at Bryn Mawr, where all outdoor sports are encouraged, as well as the regular gymnasium exercises. The class of 1903 furnishes convincing proof in the way of statistics. All the members of the class have submitted to two physical examinations, between which six months have elapsed. The result shows an increase in lung capacity (measured in cubic centimeters) from 167.67 to 190.84; increase in chest inflation (difference in centimeters) between chest normal and chest inflated) from 6.48 to 8.01; increase in total strength (measured in kilograms) from 219.32 to 249.39. Other tests show increased strength in every part of the body. And yet some people decry athletics among women.—Philadelphia Record.

Cigars and whisky sent C. O. D. and every buyer gets a watch and 13 other presents free. Read the advertisement headed astonishing offer which appears on page 10 this issue.

The English Language in Mexico.

The increased knowledge of the English language in Mexico during the last few years is remarkable. No establishment of any size attempts to do business without English-speaking clerks and correspondents. English is currently to the prominent professional men whose practice extends to a large proportions of the important foreign residents of this cosmopolitan old city. English newspapers and magazines are read by a large proportion of the refined and educated native citizens. It will probably surprise many readers of this paper to know that one-third of the Mexican Herald's subscribers in the City of Mexico are Mexicans. The study of English in Mexico is one of the important things that is assisting in closer commercial relations between Mexico and the United States.—Mexican Herald.

PERSONAL.—Any lady or gentleman wishing to correspond with the opposite sex for fun, pastime, improvement or marriage, should write at once to us. We have a large list of persons wishing to correspond. We introduce you by mail. Many pleasant flirtations, warm friends and happy marriages are arranged through us. Everything strictly confidential. We refer to this paper. Address with stamp for reply and membership blanks. Personal Correspondence Club, Box 192, Chicago, Ill.

Wise Mule.

Lady Burton, a famous English woman, who has made a great many long journeys, was once traveling in Syria when a mule, which was in great pain, hobbled up to her in spite of the heavy load on his back and held up the hoof that it had hardly been able to use with a look on its face that speaks plainly, not only of agony, but also of hope that one might cure it. On looking at the hoof Lady Burton found it pierced through by a two-inch nail, which she pulled out at once, and from that time on the grateful animal followed her about like a big dog.

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Jacket, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 inch bust.
Skirt, 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 inch waist.

7910—Ladies' Five Gored Skirt with Two Box Plaits in back.
22, 24, 26, 28, 30 and 32 inch waist.

7932—Ladies' Panel Skirt, with Box Plait in Back.
22, 24, 26, 28, and 30 inch waist.

7904—Ladies' Shirt Waist.
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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES.

Animals and Mirrors.

I saw a performing monkey the other day. He went through many tricks very successfully. Toward the end of the performance he was ordered to put on his cocked hat before a hand mirror—which he did. He was next told to set it straight, and he tried on his headgear repeatedly, at different angles, causing much laughter. When all was over and the organ man, his helpers and the two monkeys were preparing to depart, I saw that "the General" had stolen the little mirror and was studying his own countenance with great delight! He had placed the glass on top of the hand organ, and he bent over it again and again, making the queerest faces. He afterward picked up his mirror and looked at himself earnestly and contentedly at different angles. His face had been very sad—like the faces of most monkeys I have seen—but now the wrinkles smoothed themselves out, and he nearly smiled.

Why is it that dogs hardly ever look upon a picture as anything but a flat surface with patches of color dotted over it? In all my large canine acquaintance I know but one dog who sees that portraits are likenesses of people. As for his own reflection in a glass, a dog generally mistakes it for an enemy, and "goes" for it! Later, when knocker on the nose and absence of scent have done their part in convincing him of his mistake, a dog will look coldly, not to say despitefully, at the mirror. Sometimes it is if dogs resented their reflection as caricatures of themselves.

Big Wages.

A poor man living in the western part of the United States once did a favor for a rich miner, and in return for this the miner asked him what he would like him to return. "Well," said the man, "I would think it sufficient, if you will, beginning on the first of next July, give me a penny, and then double that every following day, to the end of the month." The miner, thinking this rather little, consented to the poor man's proposal. At the end of the month he found that he had to pay six million three hundred and seventy-four thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine dollars and twelve cents to the other.

A Wise Bird.

Mexico has a clever bird called the meinarpex, who has discovered a new use for the telegraph pole. At the foot of the post this bird makes a large hole, in which it rears its family. Somewhat higher up the post it makes an observatory, from which bored holes permit it to observe the horizon in every direction. Still higher this sagacious bird makes its storehouse, and thus the pole serves as its house, fortress and warehouse.

The Business View.

Two newsboys witnessed a performance of "Hamlet."

In the last scenes, after Hamlet has killed Laertes and the king, and the queen has died of poison and Hamlet of a poisoned wound, one of the boys exclaimed: "Say, Jim, what a great show that must have been for extra editions."

A Handy Plant.

"Mother," said George, "when the grocer comes will you please order some arrowroot."

"What for, George?"

"I want to plant it and grow a bow and arrows."

We Have all Eaten Them.

"Davie, is glue used just for sticking things?" asked Edith.

Davie, the wise, meditated a moment. "Nope," he replied finally; "some folks pote it in biscuits."

An Organ Grinder's Monkey.

We had a very funny experience in the country one summer.

Mamma and grandma had gone to the city, and left my cousin Jane and Lillian and the servants to take care of the house, while they were gone. My cousin Jane was sleeping with me. She was awakened about two o'clock in the morning by some one walking in the hall. She opened the door and found my cousin Lillian trying to find our door in the dark. Jane asked her what was the matter, and she said some one was walking on the piazza roof under our windows.

They called the servants, and lighted a lamp in the hall. As soon as the creature saw the light, it came and looked right in the window. One of the servants screamed and said it was a witch, and ran away and buried her head in pillows.

It was nothing but an organ grinder's monkey.

My cousin thought the dogs next door dressed up their dog and put it on the roof to frighten us, but a gentleman told us that the organ grinder let the monkeys go loose and steal what they could at night.

You know the monkeys are awful little thieves.

Dog and "Dawg."

She was just a little miss, but she thought things out independently. Someone had been over a dog for Christmas, I said to her:

"You must not pronounce it 'dawg,' but 'dog.' She differed and for her authority she quoted her kindergarten teacher. We argued the question at some length, and she finally summed the matter up by saying, in a most decided manner:

"Well, it's 'dawg' when it's sitting down, but maybe it's 'dog' when it's running."

A PERTINENT QUERY.

"Whose oyster is this?"

She Was Going To.

Little Flaxen Hair—Papa, it's raining.

Papa (somewhat annoyed by work in hand)—Well, let it rain.

Little Flaxen Hair (timidly)—I was going to.

Miss Pecke—Johnny, dear, do you think I am the best teacher you ever had?

Johnny—No, ma'am; "Experience is the best teacher."

The Office Boy's Joke.

"I don't know whether to discharge that new boy or raise his salary."

"What has he been doing?"

"He rushed in my private office this morning and told me there was a man downstairs who would like to see me."

"Who was it?"

"A blind man."

One Sister Got Away.

"Have you any brothers or sisters?" said the teacher to the boy.

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "Two brothers and a sister."

"Is that all?" questioned the teacher, who wished to be sure on this point.

"Yes, I had two sisters, but one is married."

Baby Was Helping.

"Oh, ma, come up here, quick!"

"What's the matter, Tommy?"

"Bobby's playin' at being an acrobat, and he's goin' to make th' baby jump off th' mantelpiece."

Told Him Which One

"Good morning, my little dear. I never can tell you and your sister apart. Which of the twins are you?"

And the little one made answer: "I'm the one what's out walking."

A Long Wait.

"Tommy, you must not talk when I am talking."

"Oh, sister, must I wait till you go to bed?"

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